The Oracle

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Shaler Area in need of positive press

by Kelsey Meehan and Samantha Raible

When people hear that Shaler is in the news, most assume the worst. Late this summer and even in the beginning of the school year, Shaler Area School District experienced the wrath of negative press yet again. Between a report on violence and another on bus mishaps at Marzolf Primary School, Shaler did not start off the school year on the right foot.

In late August, WPXI reported, "according to the school safety reports from the 2008-2009 school year, Gateway and Shaler tied for the most assault and fights involving student. Both schools had 32 on record for the year."

In September, WPXI reported, "school administrators said nearly a dozen students boarded the wrong bus and were dropped off at the wrong stops."

Some people wonder why it is so difficult to find positive news about Shaler in the media. One reason could be that the district does not have a full time public relations position.

The surrounding districts of Shaler, which include North Hills, Fox Chapel, Hampton, and North Allegheny, all have a public relations department. People read about these schools all the time.

Weekly, The Pittsburgh Post Gazette North section publishes news articles about the school districts around Shaler such as North Hills, Fox Chapel and North Allegheny. These articles highlight different district's accomplishments and awards. Shaler, on the other hand, is mostly absent from the section.

"I'm not making excuses, we don't have a media person... it's an expense that the school board has felt is unnecessary."
-Dr. Donald Lee

However, the North section is not the only place to read about districts' accomplishments. Every school district has a website. If one checks North Hills' website, there is a specific link for the media to get positive updates and accomplishments.

The North Hills communications coordinator, Tina Vojtko, said that with a link to media coverage, it helps inform the community. The link helps highlight positive stories about the school district.

"Eighty percent of the community does not attend the school," Vojtko said. "With the website they get a chance to become involved in the community."

However, if there is no positive press to report on, the website's media link and the district's voice in the newspaper becomes relatively useless. In order to get the district a positive reputation, Shaler needs to get itself in Pittsburgh newspapers.

"I'm willing to step up and do more PR, and I know Mrs. Thiel agrees with me on that. We just need to know connections, who to send stuff to," Principal Mr. Tim Royall said.

Connections could help in gaining positive press for our district and it is also something that almost certainly would be in a public relations figure's job description. It is not the job of a principal or an activities director to send press releases.

"I think public relations professionals help the public build a sense of pride about their district. What I do helps the public have a good feeling about the school district," Bonnie Berzonski, Fox Chapel's coordinator of communications, said.

Unfortunately, boosting Shaler's pride would come at a cost. According to the administration, a main reason that Shaler does not have a specific public relations figure position is the budget.

"I'm not making excuses, we obviously don't have a media person; that's an expense. It's an expense that the school board has felt is unnecessary," Superintendent Dr. Donald Lee said.

Violence and bus mishaps aren't the only things that Shaler should be known for. The district needs to put itself out there in the public so that those outside the district have a chance to see our accomplishments.

Shaler students get an opportunity for adventure on a trip to Europe

by Kelsey Meehan

This past summer, students from Shaler Area High School had the opportunity to travel abroad to Europe. Students, along with Mr. Jason Pirring, Mr. Peter Hackett, Mr. Cory Williams, and Miss Holly Anderson, explored England, France, and Italy.

At the end of the school year in 2009, Pirring announced that he would be taking a group of students to Europe. Students had to raise approximately $2,400 in order to go. It may have been a lot of money, but according to the 29 students and teachers who went on the trip, it was well worth it.

"A lot of us probably won't have the opportunity to go to Europe again. The experience outweighed the money," senior Samantha Raible said.

Students and chaperones at the Colosseum (Mr. Pirring)

The trip left for Italy on June 22, and came back to the US on July 1. While in Italy, the group went to Rome, Florence, Assisi, and Pisa. The group saw the Trevi Fountain, the Colosseum, the Roman Business Forum, the Vatican, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Statue of David, and everything else that Italian culture had to offer.

"One of my favorite things about Italy was the food. The pasta and the pizza were so good, and I had gelato every day," junior Anna Porter said.

After experiencing Italy, the group took a night train to France. While there, they took a boat tour of Paris and saw the Louvre, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and the Arc de Triomphe.

"I really loved Paris. We weren't there for long, but they gave us a lot of time to interact with different people. Plus all of Europe was excited about the World Cup, so we got to experience that," Porter said.

Their final destination was London, England. From Paris, the group took "The Chunnel", a train that passes underneath the English Channel between Paris and London. London was a favorite stop for many students on the tour.

"London was definitely my favorite place. It was very relaxed. They thought we were funny because we couldn't pronounce anything. The accents were probably one of the best parts of the trip," senior Taylor Miksic said.

While in London, the group saw Big Ben, the Tower of London, the Crown Jewels, and the London Bridge.

For most, if not all of the students who went on the trip, the trip was a chance of a lifetime.

"I think for many kids there isn't going to be another opportunity like this. This a shared experience with friends, and one that takes away an unknown aspect of being out of the country," Hackett said.

A Hero's Homecoming

Get ready for HC 2010

by Nicholas Schmitt

Homecoming is an important event in the Shaler Area social calendar. It is a time marked by seeing friends, both current and past.

According to the Activities Director, Mrs. Mindy Thiel, the beginnings of homecoming start with the decision on the date.

"Mr. Holzshu and I sit down when the WPIAL introduces the football schedule and decide on a date. Usually, the date is in September, making homecoming very strenuous on everyone because the staff is just getting back to school."

Homecoming will begin with the *5th Annual Run with the Titans*. It will begin at Kiwanis Park at 8:00 am and its participants will run 3.1 miles.

At 10:30, the morning festivities will continue with the annual parade.

"This year's theme, *A Hero's Homecoming*, was a decision which was made by the Shaler Area student body," said Mrs. Thiel.

During the parade, the six floats constructed by each class, the band and choir will debut.

"Class floats are relied upon by the class officers, since they are the student leaders, to recruit their friends to help with the construction," said Mrs. Thiel.

After the parade, one can enjoy the different activities within Shaler Area. All proceeds will go back to the sponsor.

Then at 1:30, the Shaler Area Titans will take on the Seneca Valley Raiders. During the game the banner winners, float finalists, and the introduction of the homecoming king and queen will be announced.

"The day will conclude with the dance at 7:30," states Mrs. Thiel. "Hope to see you out there tomorrow, Titans!"

OPINIONS

Is a meal at 9:38 a.m. breakfast or lunch?

There are lots of good things about 4th pd lunch

by Stephen Kimpel

During the much coveted summer break it is not uncommon for the average high school student to wake up until 9 o'clock am. In stark opposition, a student fortunate enough to have fourth period lunch may have their "noontime" meal at 9:37 A.M. Nevertheless, a question still remains: Is this schedule really that bad?

Although the negative aspects associated with the early mealtime may be obvious, there are some substantial benefits associated with eating during fourth period. While some may identify the early time of the lunch as its major flaw, it could quite easily be seen as its biggest positive. Thus, the advantages associated with the previously labeled "premature" lunch deal directly with the timing of the period.

As a direct result of the early timing of the period, there are obvious benefits in the quality of the food. Additionally, the lunch room should, in theory, be sparkling.

When asked about the positives of the earlier lunch senior Amie Dobracki stated, "The food is fresh and we get first dibs on the food. The tables are typically cleaner."

Due to the early nature of the period, some students are afforded the opportunity to eat a late breakfast as he or she did so regularly during the summer break. Once again, one can find fourth period lunch conforming to meet the needs and benefit the students.

"I like fourth period lunch because I am already starving for food even after a good breakfast in the morning," senior Ben Werner confirmed.

Unlike any other lunch during the day, the fourth period lunch is followed by a segment of homeroom which provides an excellent opportunity for students to digest their meal before continuing the academic schedule.

Now, these arguments may be considered excessive in certain areas, but there is one undisputed and underappreciated benefit associated with the mealtime. Contrary to any other lunch, the fourth period "window dwellers" do not have to reckon with the unrelenting sunshine bursting through the glass.

"I can focus on my food when the sun isn't shining in my eyes," junior Brian Bittner said.

It seems, however, that the positive aspects of fourth period surpass all other lunch periods combined.

"My mommy tells me that I can wake up later since I eat fourth period lunch instead of breakfast in the early morning," Shane Shiring stated with great passion.

Although many students may be quick to point out the problems associated with an early lunchtime, there are numerous benefits waiting to be explored in the arena of the notorious fourth period lunch. Many students, or maybe just a large handful, have reached a full appreciation and almost a love for the lunch.

"I love fourth period lunch. The grumblies in my tummy aren't quite so grumbly at 9:37 am," Bittner stated.

Lunch? I haven't even had breakfast yet

by Shelby Tabrosky

Lunch…at 9:38A.M? To me, I wouldn't really call that a lunch, because normally people eat lunch around noon. So if lunch is being served at a breakfast time, would we call it a brunch? Shaler's new addition of 4th period lunch has people complaining.

"It's too early, and I'm not even hungry," freshman Dakota Rossmiller said.

Since it is still 9:38 a.m., people are still in sleep mode. Students are not talkative this early, especially because at this time in the summer, students would be sleeping. That makes a boring lunch.

"If it was later in the day, more people would have more stories to share. It's like no one wants to talk," senior Delaney DeMasi said.

In the summer or on a weekend, 9:30 a.m. would be breakfast time. Teens usually digest foods like pancakes, cereal, and waffles at that time. For the past month, people who have 4th period lunch have been eating foods like tacos, soup, hamburgers, and chicken. That's too much grease for the morning.

Others complain that the rest of the day seems too long.

"By the time I'm done with lunch, I notice I still have a long day ahead of me, especially when I start to doze off in class," senior Jenn Anderson said.

It is true. The carbohydrates from foods will wear off, leaving the body tired. Symptoms of losing energy, or what we can call "4th Periodi-tis", are falling asleep in class, not focusing on the teacher and the lesson, and having drool marks on your desk. Not only will class participation decrease, but grades will as well.

To combat this, some people bring snacks for near the end of the day, but some teachers do not allow eating in class. Because some students cannot eat in class, they have to make time at their locker to eat.

Another issue will arise at the end of the semester when students switch lunches. Some students will have to change their lunch from 7th period to 4th period the second half of the school year; other students will have to change from 4th period to 7th period.

That would be a hard adjustment. Telling your body to get used to the 9:38 lunch period, then forcing it to survive till 7th period would be hard. If we could vote, 4th period lunch would be voted off of the schedule like a *Survivor* reject.

Permission slips to watch Obama speech ridiculous

by Amity Hudak

Some students may have noticed a letter containing the Shaler Area letterhead in their mailboxes a few weeks ago. The letter did not contain a note sentencing them to serve endless detentions; instead, it contained a permission slip with a short description of an event that took place on September 14.

This ordinary Tuesday was the day in which President Barack Obama addressed students all over the nation. Families were sent permission slips because during the week of September 20th, grades 7-12 social studies classes were to watch and discuss the speech.

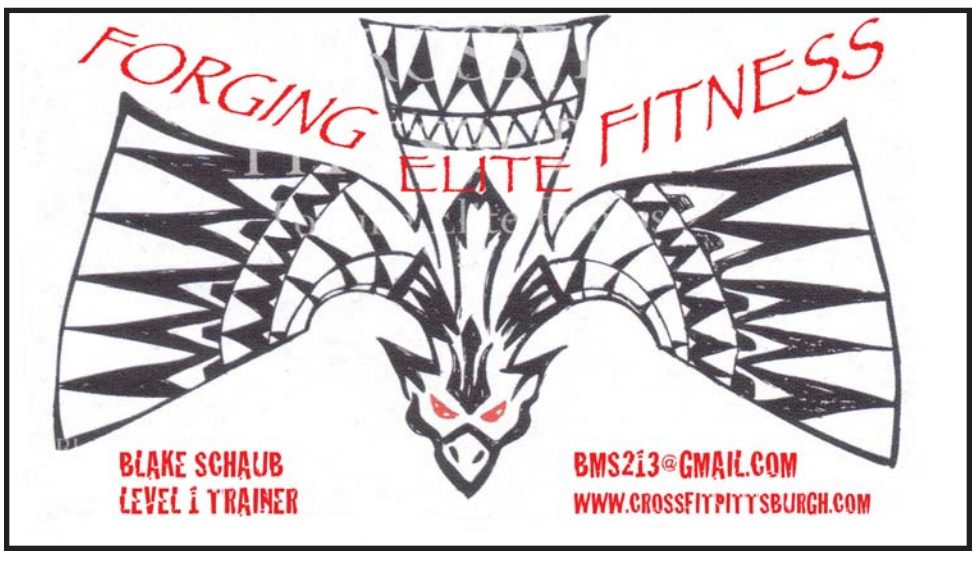
It is understandable that everyone may not have the same political beliefs as Obama and do not approve of his leadership. Most of the reason so much controversy was raised because of the speech may be because of ignorance; ignorance to the main point of the speech, ignorance to Obama's religion, and ignorance to his race. However, the speech was simply about students staying in school.

"Nobody gets to write your destiny but you. Your future is in your hands. Your life is what you make of it. And nothing -- absolutely nothing -- is beyond your reach, so long as you're willing to dream big, so long as you're willing to work hard. So long as you're willing to stay focused on your education, there is not a single thing that any of you cannot accomplish, not a single thing. I believe that," Obama said.

The president did not try to "brainwash" students with political talk. Ultimately, it came down to the president saying that if students do not finish their high school education, not only are they doing a disservice to themselves and their families, but also to their country.

President Obama was just trying to motivate and provide inspiration. No permission slips should have been needed to for this speech designed to encourage students. If anything, the speech should have been shown to all students throughout the district.

It would not have been bad for all Shaler Area students to hear the President of the United States tell them, "So find an adult you trust – a parent, grandparent or teacher; a coach or counselor – and ask them to help you stay on track to meet your goals. And even when you're struggling, even when you're discouraged, and you feel like other people have given up on you – don't ever give up on yourself. I expect great things from each of you…I know you can do it."



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, not necessarily of The Oracle staff.

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.

Early start time and teenagers do not mix

by Anna Porter

You hear your alarm clock go off blaring, and look at your clock-its six o'clock in the morning. In just an hour and eighteen minutes you'll be sitting at your desk in first period attempting not to pass out from lack of sleep.

Practically anyone in the high school-students, teachers, and faculty included-knows exactly what I'm talking about: the getting-out-of-bed-in-the-morning-and-still-being-exhausted-feeling that everyone becomes used to Monday through Friday.

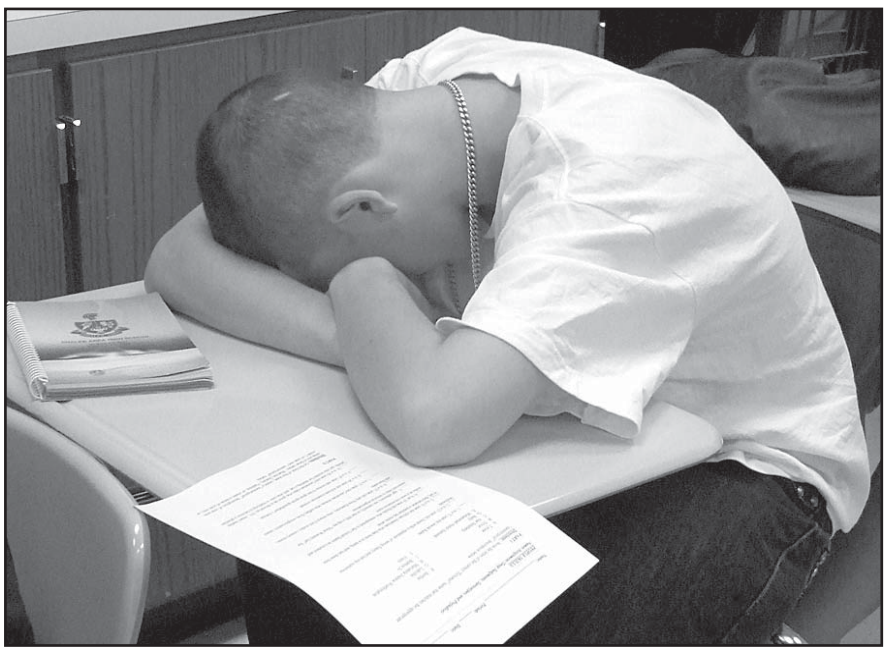
"I tell everyone to guard their sleep. It's the most important thing. Turn off your cell phones, be careful with your work schedule, and don't take naps, just wait until the night," school nurse Leslie Scheuer said.

Teenagers, now more than ever, are showing record high percentages when it comes to sleep loss. According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, the average teenager needs 9-10 hours of sleep per night. However, teenagers nowadays are only receiving about seven hours of sleep, a two hour deficit per night. That's already a 14 hour loss per week.

As children grow to teenagers, the body releases a sleep-related hormone, called melatonin, at a different time than usual. Instead of their bodies being ready to go to sleep at eight o'clock, for example, internal clocks change, telling bodies they are ready to sleep at eleven o'clock instead.

Scheuer has seen firsthand the many tired kids that come into the high school each day.

"Sleep loss is almost just as impairing as people who are drinking," Scheuer said. "It makes people become more irritable and more prone to sickness."



A tired student takes a nap during first period (Anna Porter)

The cause behind teenagers' lack of sleep is the early start time of school, a vicious cycle which has taken many victims here at the high school, and can be a hard one to break. Late bedtimes lead to less sleep, which means students are tired during the week and then sleeping in on weekends.

"I do think it [school] starts off early. If school was the only thing students did, I'd want to start later," Scheuer said.

Being in the shoes of a teenager is hard. Between homework, jobs, sports, and attempting to have a social life, sleep is usually not a top priority. The high school starts at 7:18 am, a dreaded time that everyone has become accustomed to. Studies have even shown that most people, especially teenagers, do not function at their best levels until after eight in the morning. You might as well kiss first period good-bye.

Teenagers do require more sleep, by one to two hours, than their younger nine and ten-year-old siblings.

However, it's not only just students who dislike waking up early in the morning for school. "I hate waking up. I'm not a morning person and would much rather start my day off after ten o clock," Principal Tim Royall said.

"It's a requirement from the state that students are in school for 990 hours in a school year. If you take one hundred and eighty days, divide it into 990 hours you get six point some hours. We have to fit those in somewhere," Royall said. "Hypothetically, if we were to start at Mr. Royall's wakeup time at ten in the morning, adding lunch and class switch time, we would have to be here until five at night. Do we want to go to school from ten to five? How would that affect the world? How does that affect your parents? How does that affect after school jobs and everything else?"

So until those college days come, when students can pick classes and start times, students all have to become used to those sleepless nights, early mornings, and times in class when you just can't seem to keep your head up.

Painless Parking

Changes creates open spots and open minds for students

by J.T. Schwartz

Unlike previous school years, student parking has not been an issue so far this school year.

The lack of issues is due to a change from the older parking system to the first-come -first serve system that is in place now. There are no reserved spots in the tennis court lot, and once that lot is filled, students have to park at the Matulevic Field lot.

An unusual sight- the tennis court parking lot with spots still available (J.T. Schwartz)

So far, there has not been an issue. Although 155 passes have been issued for 152 spots, there have been open spots in the tennis courts every day. This is mainly because not every student has to drive to school every day.

"Every day security tells me that there are at least 20 open spots. I have issued 155 passes so it should be full, but it's not, because students aren't able to drive every day. So we are able this year to get more passes into students' hands and guarantee them a spot," Activities Director Mrs. Mindy Thiel said.

"Winter sports aren't as popular as fall sports, but the only time there might be an issue is spring sports; spring sports are the most popular. Then we might fill the whole lot up, but right now we have issued a lot of passes and I think we have got most of our drivers taken care of," Thiel said.

Another reason why parking has been a success so far this year is because construction is finished. During construction, the front parking lot lost around 30 spots. To have enough room for faculty and staff, students who were in CCAC, Beattie, and Occupational Skills were pushed into the tennis court parking lot.

"Now that the construction is over and those spots have opened up in the front lot, students in CCAC, Beattie, or Occupational Skills can park up front, which opens up more space in the tennis court lot," Thiel said.

Change can always cause some confusion, and at first, some students were a little worried about getting a spot and having to get to school earlier because of the new policy. Now that students are getting used to the new system, they can agree that it definitely has worked so far.

"I like the new system as of now because the lots are never filled," said Senior Chad Schwartz.

Mrs. Thiel is very pleased with how things have been going so far and is happy that students have been cooperative.

"I know at first people didn't understand the new parking system. But now that they understand it, I think they realize that it works pretty well," said Thiel.

Hall of Fame inducts members to class of 2010

by Taylor Miksic and Shelby Tabrosky

In the fall of 2000, the Shaler Area School District created a committee to develop the Athletic Hall of Fame. This first class was selected on October 13, 2001. A decade later, Shaler Athletic Hall has 78 honorees including the class of 2010.

The class of 2010 included Nicholas Christy (soccer/baseball), Yuri Demetris (basketball), Leo Elter (baseball/football), Michael "Micky" Moran (wrestling), Milo Orsini (soccer), Howard Ruppert (coach) and Joesph Miller (community).

All of the inductees had good memories of their time in high school.

Elter had a triumphant career not only during high school, but after high school as well. At Shaler, he was known for not only being a great baseball player, but also a football player. The son of a former Steelers and Redskins player, he played for the White Sox for several years.

"We had a very good team in high school, some excellent coaches. We had a lot of good guys and a lot of us went to play professional ball," Elter said.

The Hall of Famers were chosen by The Selection Committee which consists of teachers, members of community appointed by the Hall of Fame Committee, administrators, and coaches.

Amy Bodenlos, the coordinator of events, was happy with the way the Hall of Fame weekend turned out.

"Overall, they loved it. It is a fun and happy job because we are making people happy, and also takes them back to a place where they sort have forgotten about," Bodenlos said.

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Exchange students learning Shaler way of life

by Anna Porter

The start of every school year brings changes: new schedules to become use to, new people to meet, even new locker combinations to remember. How would it feel to go through all these changes on a completely different continent? There are two people in our school who could answer that: Woytek Kruk from Poland and Erika Ohinata from Japan.

Kruk, 16, was thrilled when he heard he would be coming to America and saw it as a great opportunity to help improve his English, which he has been studying for six years.

"A lot of people in Poland think that America is the best," he said. "In the beginning of the summer, I got in the mail a letter from an organization saying I would be coming to America. When I heard I was quite excited."

The organization that contacted Kruk tries to make the move to America as easy as possible and sets the foreign exchange student up with a host family. Sophomore Chris Brasile and his family are acting as Kruk's family for the year that he is here.

"I'm really interested in it because I like different cultures, but it's a lot of responsibility on me because I'm showing him around," Brasile said. "He has shown me a lot of stuff that I wouldn't have known before."

Woytek Kruk (Anna Porter)

Erika Ohinata (Anna Porter)

Although it is the opportunity of a lifetime, Kruk has had some difficulty adjusting to meal times, American education, and being away from his hometown and family.

"He said it's not that different, when we drive around. He said it's like just another day in Poland," Brasile said.

So far Kruk's favorite sights have been Downtown, the Carnegie Mellon campus, and, of course, Polish Hill. Now that Pittsburgh is checked off his list, Kruk has more places he would like to see including New York City and California's west coast.

Ohinata, 16 and born in Tokyo, felt a mix of emotions when news came to her that she would be participating in a foreign exchange program. Ohinata, whose older brother has also been a foreign exchange student in New York and Canada, was excited but also very nervous about the journey.

"When I think of America, I think of freedom," she said, a fact that must have been reassuring to her.

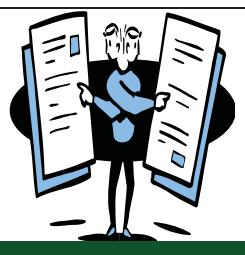
Ohinata, who has studied English for four years, said that Shaler is very different from her school in Japan and that speaking and writing in English has been a large obstacle for her to overcome.

"The hardest thing to adapt to has been the English language, and making friends," she said.

Ohinata's host family does not have any children at the high school. However, senior Samantha Raible is neighbors with Ohinata's host family and has been able to show her around Shaler.

"Erika is really quiet, but once you get to know her she's really down to earth and really cool," Raible said. "The number of people at the school can overwhelm her at times and sometimes the English is challenging for her. But, she's taught me a lot about the Japanese culture. She showed me a Seventeen magazine from Japan, and taught me about the fashion over there, and it's a lot different."

Ohinata's favorite class has been her foods class, and said french fries have been her favorite American food so far. She's interested in dance, and Japanese pop. Before her stay here is up, she hopes to visit New York City, Washington D.C, and Niagara Falls.

SAT?  **ACT ?**

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

SPORTS

Volleyball team leads section with experienced group

by Shelby Tabrosky

This season, the Shaler Area Girls Varsity Volleyball team looks like the same successful team as last year, having an 8-1 record so far. They are again traveling down the road towards playoffs.

The team consists mainly of returning players, such as seniors Kim Antosz, Leah Kuhn, Sami Panyi, Alex Schmitt, Erin Smith, and Marie Tappe, all have playoff experience.

"We have a strong team and have a lot of returning players with a strong core of seniors and a couple contributing sophomores and juniors to our lineup," said assistant coach Mr. Paul Stadelman.

The team has made it to playoffs for the past five years, and the players are eyeing the prize: WPIAL championship. In the last three years, the girls have played Mt. Lebanon in playoffs but have never beaten them.

"It's always been a fierce competition and rivalry. We always come up a little short against them in the quarterfinals, but I think we got it this year," senior setter captain Erin Smith said.

However, coach Stadelman does not refer to Mt. Lebanon as a rival. He explained "a rivalry would have to exchange blows," and Shaler has yet to beat the Blue Devils in those three years.

Alex Schmitt sets for a spike. (Shelby Tabrosky)

"What I think about [rivalry] is it is one win away from the next round and one loss away from being out of it. Every single person you are going to play in playoffs will be a rival," Stadelman said.

Shaler section rivals include Plum, Butler, and Fox Chapel. But, if Stadelman's definition applies, they aren't really rivals as Shaler hasn't lost a section match yet. Currently, the Titans are undefeated in section.

Nevertheless, in order to continue its winning ways, the team has to avoid their problems.

"One of our biggest challenges is to make sure we are staying healthy…Losing one person or two people can really be detrimental to our lineup and what we are trying to do," Stadelman said.

With the team succeeding in "W's", the girls have a great chance to make it to playoffs. The team has learned from their mistakes made in the nail-biting loss against Baldwin. MSA Sports Network has the Titans ranked third. Baldwin is ranked second. Even with the loss, the team is feeling good about its chances.

"You know, I really do feel confident that we are definitely going to playoffs, and section champs is a great possibility as well," Smith said.

Stadelman agreed.

"We definitely have the potential. It's just a matter of peaking at the right time," he said.

Shaler cross country struggles in tough section matches

by J.T. Schwartz

Despite a combined record of 1-9 between the boys and girls teams, the Shaler Cross Country teams are set on continuing to work hard and compete as best as they can.

Going into the season, the expectations for the team were not very high. This isn't due to the lack of talent on the team, but because of the section the team is in. With North Allegheny, North Hills, and Seneca Valley in the section, the chances for a section title are almost nonexistent.

"We want to try to win more meets, but it is difficult in our section. Just to give you an example, the boys' team went to an invitational early in the season; it was the Red, White and Blue invitational. When they went to it, 3 of our section schools, NA, North hills and Seneca Valley, finished in the top five out of 63. We were 23 out of 63," said Head Coach, Mr. Mike Dusch. "The team realizes that our section is tough to win and they know that going in. They know from me that our goal is to improve everyone's time, and that has happened."

Although the team is not doing as well as the runners would like, there are many doing well indivdually

"Individually there is always some hope for some of the athletes to go to the state championships, that is the main goal for any individual runner," said Mr. Dusch.

As any team athlete knows, it is hard to continue to work hard and want to be at practice when the team is not succeeding, but that isn't the case with the cross country team.

"There are people on the team who show up every day. Even though they might be a little sore they are here working hard every practice," Mr. Dusch said.

Boys soccer hopes to win after tough losses to section rivals

by Taylor Miksic

The boys soccer team started its season off with a bang, as well as a new coach. Ryan Montgomery, the previous assistant coach at Mount Lebanon, took over as head coach for the Shaler boys this year.

The boys started off well, winning the first round of the Gene Biles tournament on Friday September 3rd, but losing the second round the next day to Kiski Area. The team redeemed itself shortly after by winning their next game five days later against Baldwin.

Billy Pfeil and Brennan Reynolds trot off of the field. (Taylor Miksic)

The team's record is 3-7-2 as of the second Butler game. The tie occurred after double overtime in the game against North Hills. The team, as well as Montgomery, is hoping for another win soon. Although the Butler game that was scheduled for the 16th of September was cancelled, it was rescheduled for the 28th.

Montgomery was staying positive despite the current losing streak of the team. He, along with the team, was hoping to beat the Butler Tornados to get the team back on track.

"We [were] hoping to start our run for the playoffs that evening" says Montgomery about the game against Butler. "There are no easy teams in our section so you can't take anyone lightly. I believe we can beat any team in the league as long as we don't beat ourselves."

The team lost their game against Butler and then to North Hills two days later, 2-1.

"The Butler game was a tough loss. After dominating most of the game we gave up to untimely goals and just couldn't generate any of our own," Coach Montgomery said.

"Despite our recent results I still believe we can make it. We have the talent, we just need to get on a roll and we will be fine." Montgomery said.

Girls soccer team moves forward with injury-riddled roster

by Taylor Miksic

The Shaler girls soccer team has been off to a great start, but will the six injuries that have recently occurred set their progress back?

Coach James Meara, last year's boys soccer coach, took over the girl's team this year, and has been doing a great job in leading the team to victory.

A victory came four days later in the first sectional game of the girl's season against Butler. They went on to win two more games against Seneca Valley and North Allegheny.

"During games like Seneca, Butler, and N.A, we've played to our potential," senior captain Amie Dobracki said. "But we haven't played to our potential every single game."

The team lost against Pine Richland, North Hills, and Hampton, but is hoping to beat these teams the second time around.

Despite these losses, the team beat one of its biggest rivals, North Allegheny.

But with this exciting win, came a great loss. Captain Angie Bagwell dislocated her shoulder during the North Allegheny game and has been unable to play ever since.

Bagwell says that playoffs are definitely the goal and it is within reach, she said, "Isn't it about time that the Shaler Area girl's soccer team gets to playoffs!"

They will continue working hard and hopefully the injured team members will be able to recover quickly to help the team succeed in its goal, to make playoffs.

SPORTS

Titans battling for playoff spot

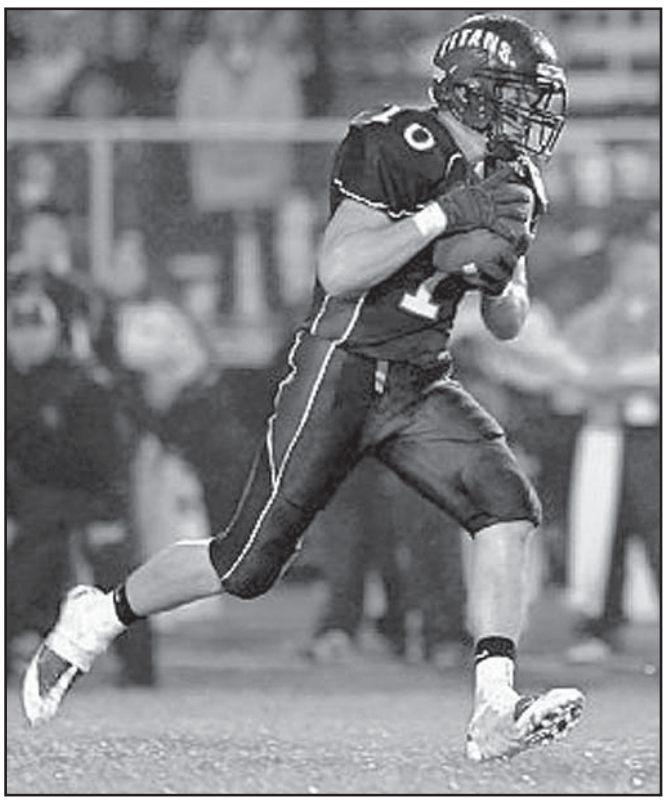
by Vince Lamanna

The Titan football team has been quite the surprise this season, with a record of 4-2. With nine seniors and three returning starters, the Titans were not anticipated to be WPIAL contenders.

Shaler started off with a loss against Upper Saint Clair, 24-6. Then, it traveled to Hempfield to take on the Spartans. Facing a deficit coming into the second half, the Titans made a change in the backfield. Tight end J.P. Holtz was moved to tailback and Zack Schramm was moved to fullback.

"We had to change the backfield to make our run game successful, thus opening up the pass game," said Schramm.

From there, Holtz led the Titans to a thrilling comeback. Along with a 59-yard run by Sean Gavin, the Titans took the victory 35-28. The next game was home against the Black Hawks of Bethel Park, to which Shaler played the underdog. Holtz played a phenomenal game scoring four touchdowns.



JP Holtz in action at Titan Stadium (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

Then the Titans traveled to North Hills to take on the Indians. The team played under par against their heated rival, being able to cross the 50 yard line once or twice. Shaler took a 28-7 loss with the only Titan score coming from Holtz.

"We weren't ready to play," long snapper Nick Piett said. "We weren't ready all week and just plain and simple didn't show up to play."

The boys regrouped to play at home against Butler, who entered Titan Stadium 0-4.

"We actually didn't execute that well on offense, but our defense stepped up and stopped their less than stellar attack" safety Nick Kerin said.

With a 3-2 record, Shaler headed up to Erie McDowell. The Titans took the game into double overtime, with the deciding play coming from an 8-yard touchdown to Matt Rousseau.

The Titans then went for the two point conversion with a pass to Joe Panza in the endzone to win the game for Shaler 43-42.

Now 4-3, the Titans hope to get a big win tomorrow at Homecoming against Seneca Valley. This could be a deciding game for Shaler, being they face powerhouse North Allegheny, followed by Pine Richland.

The Titans now hope to get a win tomorrow and finish the season with a strong enough record for playoffs, but they just need to take one game at a time.

"We can't think too far ahead, we concentrate on one game every week, and show up to play our game," wide receiver Jon Deasy said,

Playing in a tough section, these last few games are important in the Titan playoff run. A win over Seneca Valley and Pine Richland can put the Titans in good playoff position. Shaler now holds the third spot in their section, and are a heavy playoff contenders.Riding a two game win streak into homecoming, the Titans hope to carry this momentum into their remaining games.

Girls tennis regroups after missing playoffs

by Ben Mulig

The Lady Titans tennis team took the courts again. The girls' team had a lot of old faces returning to the team which made head coach Chuck Mura very confident in his team. After compiling a record of 8-6 last season and making the WPIAL playoffs, the team expected to achieve even greater goals this year.

"Our main goal coming into the season was to make the playoffs for the 5th year in a row. It is tough competing in the section we are in, but we had very high expectations for the team," Mura said.

The Lady Titans looked towards their seniors to lead the way. Maggie O'Bryan, Rachel Danchek, and Rachel Wanovich were the heart and soul of the squad. On the court, these three have the most experience, and Coach Mura has taken notice to it.

"I look to my seniors to be the leaders. They've seen the examples they had to follow, and I tell them every day that the seniors that they looked up to last year are not going to be here to guide you," Mura said.

As the season is coming to an end, the Lady Titans are at a .500 record, but the playoffs are out of the question. They lost two chaotic matches to Gateway, which ended up being the factor that knocked them out of playoff contention.

"We basically have the same record as last year, but last year we split games with Gateway which is how we made it into playoffs. This year just didn't go our way, " Mura said.

Overall, the season has not been what the Lady Titans were hoping for. Despite a valiant effort, they did not reach their pre-season goal of capturing a WPIAL playoff spot. Five games still remain and are being pushed back due to the rainy October weather. Titans are going to do everything they can to finish the season strong.

Lady Titan golf making progress despite tough competition

by Shelby Tabrosky

Just by looking at the record of 3-8, the Girls Varsity Golf team did not have successful season. However, head coach Mr. Tom Anke said the team was more competitive than last year.

"Last year we had a young team. This year, we have more experienced players because everybody is getting better from last year," Anke said.

Girls golf team (Shelby Tabrosky)

Junior Sydney Smyers agreed.

"This year was a lot more fun than last year mostly because we all are scoring better," Smyers said.

One of the reasons the record was underwhelming was that the competition was tougher than last year.

"Our competition was much tougher than last year. Last year, we won five games, but this year, three. I still think overall it was a successful season," Smyers said.

Smyers, sister of Samantha Smyers who placed 22nd in States last year, qualified for the WPIAL championship on October 5 at Nevillewood, but she did not qualify for the state championship.

"It was freezing, but okay. I didn't qualify but I played decent. All the girls at this level are like pros," she said. "It was a pretty cool experience though."

In only its second year as a varsity sport, the girls golf team seems to be on the right track.

"There are good things on the horizon," Anke said.

Boys golf hopes to end frustration

by Ben Mulig

Coming back to school is nothing fun or exciting for kids, except for a group of young men ready to hit the greens.

The Shaler Area Men's Golf Team was back in action this fall with a new group of athletes that they hoped would lead them to new heights. After the season they had last year, head coach James Beran expected great things from his returning players and the new wave of athletes joining the team.

This year's squad was led by seniors Brandon Cristiano, Bryan Ketterer, Matt Carlson, and Brian Conrad. They have been golfing for most of their lives, and were looking to have a successful season on the fairways.

"I feel that my role this year was to take these underclassmen under my wing. I want to make everyone on this team better, and be a leader. I've been working hard this season, and I hope that the younger kids are learning what it takes to be a great golfer," Cristiano said.

Now that they have reached the conclusion of the 2010 season, the Titans have accumulated a record of 0-13 despite their valiant efforts. Shaler failed to send anyone to WPIALS despite Conrad's respectable score of 89. With only one match remaining, the Titans are going to do everything they can to get a check in the win column.

The Back Page

Pennsylvania Haunts

The best haunts in PA are waiting for you

by Holly Doerfler

The Scarehouse- Rated the 2nd best haunted house in the United States, The Scarehouse is in it to win your soul. This haunted house has multiple haunts in one which include Rampage, Delirium, and The Forsaken. Even though this haunted house only takes about 15 minutes to go through, it has some of the best, most realistic scenery. The Delirium is the best part of the haunted house by far. It's fixed with color and crazy scenery that blows your mind to another universe.

Address: 118 Locust Street Pittsburgh –Pa 15223

Recommended ages: 13 and older

The Haunted Mine at Tour-Ed Mine- This haunt is unlike any other. Instead of a haunted house it is a haunted mine. Not only is its scenery and actors trying to scare you, but Tour-Ed Mine is really haunted. To add a better experience, the movie "My Bloody Valentine" was filmed in these mines. The Haunted Mine is by far nothing anyone has seen yet. Imagine being taken into the depths of these mines and it's up to you to find your way out. Unfortunately, not everyone is able to make it out.

Address: 748 Bull Creek Rd. Tarentum – Pa 15084-3004

Recommended ages: 10 and older

Phantom Fright Nights – Kennywood during October is one of the best ideas they've had yet. If you haven't experienced this thrill, then you haven't experienced the best. Kennywood is overtaken by creepy and mysterious monsters and murderers that are out to get everyone who comes in their territory. The park is completely flipped from a family amusement park to having "caution" signs everywhere. You have been warned.

Address: 4800 Kennywood Blvd. West Mifflin –Pa 15122

Recommended ages: 13 and older

Field of Screams- This attraction has a combination of three different haunted houses you can choose from. The Frightmare Asylum, Den of Darkness, and Haunted Hayride are each separate ways to experience this horrifying attraction. You can do all, if you dare.

Address: 191 College Ave, Mountville – Pa 17554 (approximately 4 hours away)

Recommended ages: any age

WEIRD News

compiled by Taylor Miksic

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — A doctor involved in an "on-again, off-again" relationship apparently tried to force her way into her boyfriend's home by sliding down the chimney, police said Tuesday. Her decomposing body was found there three days later. Dr. Jacquelyn Kotarac, 49, first tried to get into the house with a shovel, then climbed a ladder to the roof last Wednesday night, removed the chimney cap and slid feet first down the flue, police said.

FRENCHTOWN, Mont. -Police say a Montana woman used an unlikely weapon to fend off a charging bear — a zucchini.

Missoula County Sheriff's Lt. Rich Maricelli says a 200-pound black bear attacked the woman's 12-year-old collie just after midnight Wednesday on the back porch of her home about 15 miles west of Missoula.

When the woman, whom police did not name, screamed to draw the bear's attention, it charged her and swiped at her leg.

Maricelli says the woman jumped back into the doorway and reached for the nearest object on her kitchen counter — a 12-inch zucchini from her garden.

The woman flung the vegetable at the bear, striking it on top of the head and causing it to flee.

PDT KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia -Police say a burglar broke into a house in Malaysia to steal watches and jewelry then fell asleep with his loot on the owners' couch.

The Star and New Straits Time report when the owners returned to their home in northern state Saturday, they were shocked to find the living room in a mess and a man napping upstairs. The loot was worth some 10,000 ringgit ($3,200).

The burglar woke up and escaped through a window but was arrested nearby. The 42-year-old man has not been charged yet.

OLD BRIDGE, NJ- Donna Simpson, from New Jersey, weighs 273kg but told the *Daily Mail* newspaper she had her heart set on reaching her goal weight of 1000lb (450kg) in two years.

The 42-year-old already holds the title of the world's fattest mother after giving birth to her daughter in 2007 when she weighed 241kg.

To put on enough weight, Ms Simpson will need to eat 12,000 calories a day, which is six times the recommended daily intake for women.

SCG SHALER CULTURE GRID

SCG	What was your worst Halloween costume?	Where do you see yourself in five years?	What would you do if I handed you a million dollars right now?	Who is one person you could not live without?
Senior Dina Labanc	I was only ever a princess	Getting my college degree in business	I'd give you a really big hug	My best friend/ boyfriend, Shane Holland
Senior Shane Taylor	I was a Ninja Turtle	Graduating from college, major: undecided	I would buy a Chevy Camaro SS	Family
Senior Candace Tabrosky	I was a mummy made from toilet paper	Getting a degree in graphic design	Go on vaction to Jamica	My twin/ best friend, Shelby
Activities Director Mrs. Thiel	I was Minnie Mouse	Right here in Shaler	Pay off my house and student loans	Family