

The Oracle

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Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

October 2016

Six inducted to Athletic Hall of Fame

by Tim Templin & Sarah Hefferin

Shaler Area School District recognized six distinguished athletes by inducting them into the Athletic Hall of Fame for the class of 2016.

Since 2001, the Hall of Fame Committee has been evaluating every athlete and sports team that have been nominated for the hall of fame and determining who is worthy of being inducted for that year.

For 2016, the committee has picked six athletes, representing a wide range of Shaler Area athletics.

Three of this year's athletes were stars on the football field, coming from three different decades of football success.

Walter Brown graduated from Shaler Area 1973. Brown was a multi-sport athlete who played football, wrestled and ran track and field. Brown then went on to have a successful football career at the University of Pittsburgh, including being a member of the 1976 national championship team.

Brandon Lehmeier, class of 2001, was a force both on the football field and on the wrestling mat. He racked up over 3,000 rushing yards and was named All-Conference in football. A WPIAL champion at the 189lb weight class, Brandon was elected an All-Conference wrestler while accumulating more than 100 wins over the course of his career.

Jesse Della Valle was a 2010 graduate of Shaler Area and a standout athlete in both football and basketball. In Della Valle's senior year he compiled 1,600 all purpose yards and was named to the second team Quad-A all state. Della Valle had an excellent year and his assistant coach John Ehrentraut was once quoted saying, "His senior year, I think he was the best player in the [WPIAL] Quad-A." He then went on to play football at Penn State which included being named special teams captain his senior year.

"Getting inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at Shaler is something that I'm very proud of," Della Valle said. "I can remember in high school always



Walter Brown, Brandon Lehmeier, Jesse Della Valle, Jill DiNucci and Samantha Smyers.

walking past that wall outside of the gym and reading about the former student athletes and what they had accomplished, and now to think I will be a part of that is something that's very special to me."

Sisters Jill and Olivia DiNucci graduated three years apart and both excelled in basketball.

Jill, class of 2006, had a very successful basketball career at Shaler Area including being the team's leading scorer all four years. Olivia, was another star basketball player at Shaler Area who also ran track and field. She graduated in 2009. By the time they graduated, both were in the top 5 leading scorers in Shaler Area history.

The board also elected the first female golfer in Shaler Area history to this year's Hall of Fame class. Samantha Smyers graduated in 2010. Smyers

made her mark on the boys' golf team until her senior year, when a separate girls team was formed. Smyers was a four-year WPIAL Championship qualifier.

"I am truly honored to be nominated to the Shaler Area Athletic Hall of Fame," Smyers said, "To be recognized, along with the other athletes in the 2016 induction class and those who have come before, was a very humbling experience."

When asked what advice she could give to athletes who wish to be in her position, Smyers stressed establishing goals.

"Focus on what you want in life, whether it is academic or athletic oriented, and construct a plan to get you there! I really believe that anything is possible if you remain focused on what you want and put in 110% effort," Smyers said.

ALCOSAN to provide after-school program on careers

Shaler Area one of only five Allegheny County schools selected for the STEM-based program

by Kaitlin Parente & Gabrielle Girton

Shaler Area High School recently began an after school program called WAVE, or Workforce and Vocational Education, making Shaler Area one of only five high schools in Allegheny county to participate in this program.

WAVE, a new STEM initiative, is a free after-school program sponsored by the Allegheny County Sanitation Authority (ALCOSAN).

"WAVE is a career awareness program. Students who participate do not receive specific job training, just exposure to various careers," Twila Simmons-Walker, the manager of Scholastic Outreach and Education at ALCOSAN, stated.

WAVE will meet after school, one day a week for approximately an hour and fifteen minutes. The curriculum is structured to be one-third online and two-thirds hands-on activities, including mock interviews, activities, and field trips to local education and industry partners. Free food and transportation will be provided for all who attend.

ALCOSAN, which treats wastewater for over 83 communities, began this initiative in order to better

prepare students for job opportunities immediately after high school, but will still benefit students who won't be entering the workforce right away.

"The ALCOSAN Workforce and Vocational Exploration (WAVE) After School Program can be beneficial to both college-bound and trade-school students.

"It introduces students to careers in the skilled trades and STEM that are available at ALCOSAN. Whether students go on to college or a trade school or seek employment directly after high school, they will benefit from knowing the types of jobs that are available and what skills are necessary to them," Walker said.

WAVE also holds all of the requirements to be considered a STEM program, meaning that science, technology, engineering and mathematics are included in the curriculum.

"When most people think of STEM, they think of college bound students, but 50% of the jobs available for students in the STEM field do not require a college degree. In school people are pushed for college, but if half of the jobs out there in the STEM field don't require a college degree, we should be

spending some time helping students transition to those jobs," Dr. Timothy Royall, high school principal, said.

Exposing students to both jobs and skills needed for them is exactly the goal of ALCOSAN through WAVE. Although WAVE does not offer specific jobs to WAVE participants, those who participate are encouraged to apply for entry level positions.

"Jobs are not earmarked for students who participate in WAVE, but those who participate are encouraged to apply for positions. People hired for those jobs are trained by ALCOSAN. Candidates for some other positions must have specific skills or credentials before they can apply," Walker said.

Some of the jobs highlighted in the program can include engineering, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and chemical engineering positions.

"It's a great opportunity to get connections into jobs. They can handle up to 100 kids. So if we have 10 kids we will do it, if we have 100 kids we will do that," Dr. Royall said.

To enroll in WAVE, applications can be found in the guidance office or contact Lisa George at (412) 734-6253 or lisa.george@alcosan.org.

Students spend part of summer traveling overseas

by Bridget Nickel & Davis Deasy

Over the summer, Shaler Area High School led two groups to Italy and France. Mr. Jason Pirring, a history teacher, took 21 students to Italy while Mr. Andrew Koller, a French teacher, took eight French students to France.

The trip to Italy was eight days in total from June 27 to July 5 while the trip to France lasted three weeks from June 22 to July 12.

“The three weeks went really fast, but I think it was the perfect amount of time away from home without getting too homesick,” senior Addie Devlin, a French student, said.

For several students this was a first time experience leaving the country or even getting on a plane. Mr. Pirring thought it was really interesting to see students interact with one another and experience the different culture together.

Although the trip to Italy was more based around touring historical monuments and locations, France added a more in depth experience for the students enrolled in French classes.

“I went into it excited for the students knowing that for most of them it’s the first time they’re going to get to actually use what they’ve learned in French class and see France,” Koller said. “I was excited for them to see the things that they’ve studied for so long and then get the chance to see what it’s like to live with a French family for a week and see how the French live day by day.”

The students who went to Italy traveled all around the country. They went to Florence, Pisa, Venice, Assisi, Orvieto and Rome. The students got to see all of Italy’s famous landmarks including The Leaning Tower of Pisa, St. Mark’s Basilica and Bell Tower, St. Francis of Assisi’s Basilica and gravesite, The Colosseum, The Trevi Fountain, The Spanish Steps and The Vatican.

“Florence was definitely my favorite city. I loved the beauty that is associated with the Medici family in Florence. I didn’t know what to expect when I went there, but when we arrived I was astounded by the beauty of the city and the people in it,” senior Kaitlin Parente said.

Shaler Area High School’s trip to France was a trip more based around the French curriculum. Each student on the trip spent a week living with a different host family. The students had to speak French with their families for the majority of the trip.

“The language barrier was definitely the hardest part, but as time went on I became more comfortable speaking French with my family. My French speaking skills improved greatly over the three weeks we were there,” Devlin said.

After spending a week with a host family, the



Students visited places such as Colosseum in Rome and Chateau de Chenonceau in Tours.

French students traveled across France to numerous cities including Nice, Annecy, Beaune, Tours, and Paris. They went to the beach in Nice, traveled to vineyard wineries, hiked through the Alps, visited The Louvre, Notre Dame, and the Eiffel Tower.

“We went to a place in the Alps where you can take a cable car, go up 8,000 feet and look out over all the Alps. It was a beautiful day, we had a great time,” Koller said. “That’s probably the moment that sticks out to me just because the kids had been with their family for 5 or 6 days. It was a chance for them to share what they had experienced with the families. It was really neat.”

Though the trips were a great experience for the students, several hours and month of planning and organization went into each trip.

When it came to planning the trip to Italy, Mr. Pirring used a traveling agency for teachers and students called Explorica. While working with the company, Mr. Pirring explained that Explorica will not allow a group to go places if it didn’t feel comfortable taking a group to a certain location.

“Every month we did an evaluation to see if we should go or not. As you get closer to the trip, you have to make the final decision for if you’re going to go. Every day I was online reading about what was going on in Italy. I kept talking back and forth to the person that was helping us with this trip and we agreed that we were going to do it,” Pirring said.

Mr. Pirring ensured the safety to the parents of the group because he told them he was taking his own family. He said he wouldn’t be willing to take a group of students across the world if he didn’t feel comfortable bringing his own children.

“I think that helped a lot and with traveling. You can’t be afraid to travel. You have to go see places. If you want to go out and see places, you can’t live in fear and think things will go bad,” Pirring said.

During the trip, Pirring made sure that he stayed near the back of the group so he was able to get a good view over everyone and make sure no one was being bothered by a gypsy or surrounded by someone who was acting out of control. When the night came, he gave the students a specific room check time and made sure all doors were locked so no one could randomly come in, trying to keep the students as safe as

possible.

Preparation for the school’s trip to France began last fall. The students had monthly meetings where they would discuss what to do and what not to do, how to handle emergency situations, and how to deal with the people they met.

The November before, 130 people were killed by 7 terrorists in Paris. These terrorist attacks led to greater safety concern. When talking to parents about the trip, Mr. Koller explained that terrorism is a worldwide issue. He believes it can occur any time, anywhere in the world.

Only two days after the students left the country, 86 people were killed in a terrorist attack at Nice after a truck was driven into a crowd.

“I’m glad the kids weren’t on the French soil when it happened, but really having lived through 9/11 I just remember how awful it was. The first thing I did was contacted the host families to see if they were okay. Nice, geographically, isn’t that far from where they live,” Koller said.

Though there were acts of terrorism months prior and two days after the trip, the students in France were safe the entire time. They enjoyed the excursion trip and further developed their French speaking skills.

A really funny, yet terrifying moment during the trip to Italy was when the group lost one of its chaperones, Mr. Smith. The group was at the Pantheon and left for gelato without waiting for Mr. Smith. The group did not see him again until they returned to the hotel for the night.

“I couldn’t believe he lost such a big group. Finally he did find his way back to the hotel so I wasn’t really mad I just didn’t understand how he lost such a big group of us. That was great and it was funny, poor Mr. Smith,” Pirring said.

Despite occasional homesickness, there were no major problems on both trips. Students in Italy and France embraced the opportunity to see the world while learning about different cultures.

“I really liked the way the trip flowed. Everything went really well and by the end of the day I was completely worn out, but it was totally worth it. I’m happy I went and really enjoyed every moment,” Parente said.



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The Oracle

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

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

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

App eliminates agendas, turns iPad into hall pass

by Shannon O'Leary & Cece Robinson

The first month of school at Shaler Area High School was full of anticipation for a new system as students were left without agendas and hall passes. The traditional paperback agendas were not given to students at the beginning of the year, like they usually are and because of this, little, green slips were temporarily flooding the halls.

The lack of paperback agendas was the result of a transition to a new app on the iPads that every student has access to. This app was used last school year at the Middle School, and after proving to be successful, the high school decided it was time to try it as well.

After a few weeks delay due to minor glitches, the app was finally implemented for all students and teachers in the building on September 27.

The app, MySchoolInfo, pulls most of its information from the school website to produce a newsfeed that can be customized by the user. Students are able to write in their schedules to keep track of assignments. Useful apps, like Edline for example, are also located in the sidebar menu of the app.

As for the hall pass system, teachers create a personalized pin code to sign students in and out of their designated classrooms. While doing so, they set a certain amount of time for the student in which he/she is expected to return. Once signed out, the student's identification photo as well as the teacher's is displayed on the screen.

Despite rumors, the app does not by any means have an alarm or the specialization to lock the screen once signed out. If a student does not return in the allotted time, it is up to the teacher to determine the penalty.

This change has been implemented for a few reasons, with cost saving being most prevalent.

"The app itself will cost 20% of what the agendas would normally cost. We are saving a couple thousands of dollars by switching to this function," the Assistant Principal, Ms. Heather Berney, said.

Ms. Berney also feels that this transition will help students' technological skills by using an iPad more every day.

"We feel like we are preparing for the world after school because most of the world right now is paperless. It's good practice for [the students]," said Berney.

Although this change from paper to iPads has sparked some controversy throughout the school, the district is excited and willing to try it out. It plans on responding to any feedback from both teachers and students.

Q&A with Lois Lowry, author of "The Giver"

by Kaitlin Parente

Lois Lowry, a two-time Newbery Medalists for her children's novels, is an American author, known for her novel *The Giver*, which was recently turned into a film. Lowry has written over 30 novels, but is nowhere near being finished with her works. Lowry currently resides in Maine, close to her children and grandchildren.

How did you get your start as an author?

I majored in writing in college and worked for some years as a photojournalist before turning my attention to fiction.

The Giver, which is incredible complex in its infrastructure, holds so many important lessons. If anyone were to take one piece of advice from the particular novel, what would it be?

The importance of weighing the trade-off when one makes compromises.

Where did you get the inspiration for The Giver? How long did it take you to complete The Giver?

Inspiration always comes from imagination triggered by events in real life. It took me about a year to write the book.

What went through your mind when you were approached about turning The Giver into a movie? Did you have any say in script writing?

They were very courteous in letting me know what was happening along the way, and allowing me to read and comment on scripts (many were written). But they had the final say in everything. I just hoped that they would do a good job. And

although I disagreed with some of the choices they made, I was satisfied overall.

What do you deem as your greatest accomplishment?

My children and grandchildren.

In your biography on your website, you mentioned that you constantly scribbled stories in notebooks. Do you still have any of those stories and have any of those stories turned into novels?

No, my family moved very often and all of those early things were discarded along the way. Nothing I wrote when I was young made its way to finished work.

Are you working on anything new at the moment? If you are, care to give us a bit of a teaser?

I am always working on new things, but I don't like to talk about them when they are in progress.

How would you describe your writing style?

Hmmmm. Lyrical, I hope.

Have your grandchildren read your books? If so, what do they think of them?

I think most of my grandchildren (I have four, and five step-grandchildren) have read most of my books, probably not all. I hope they liked them!

What is the most interesting experience you've had after your first book was published?

My first book (*A Summer to Die*) was a fictionalized account of the death of my sister when we were young. The most touching response was from a family who, after they lost their 17-year-old son, copied and framed a passage from that book--words that they found comforting.



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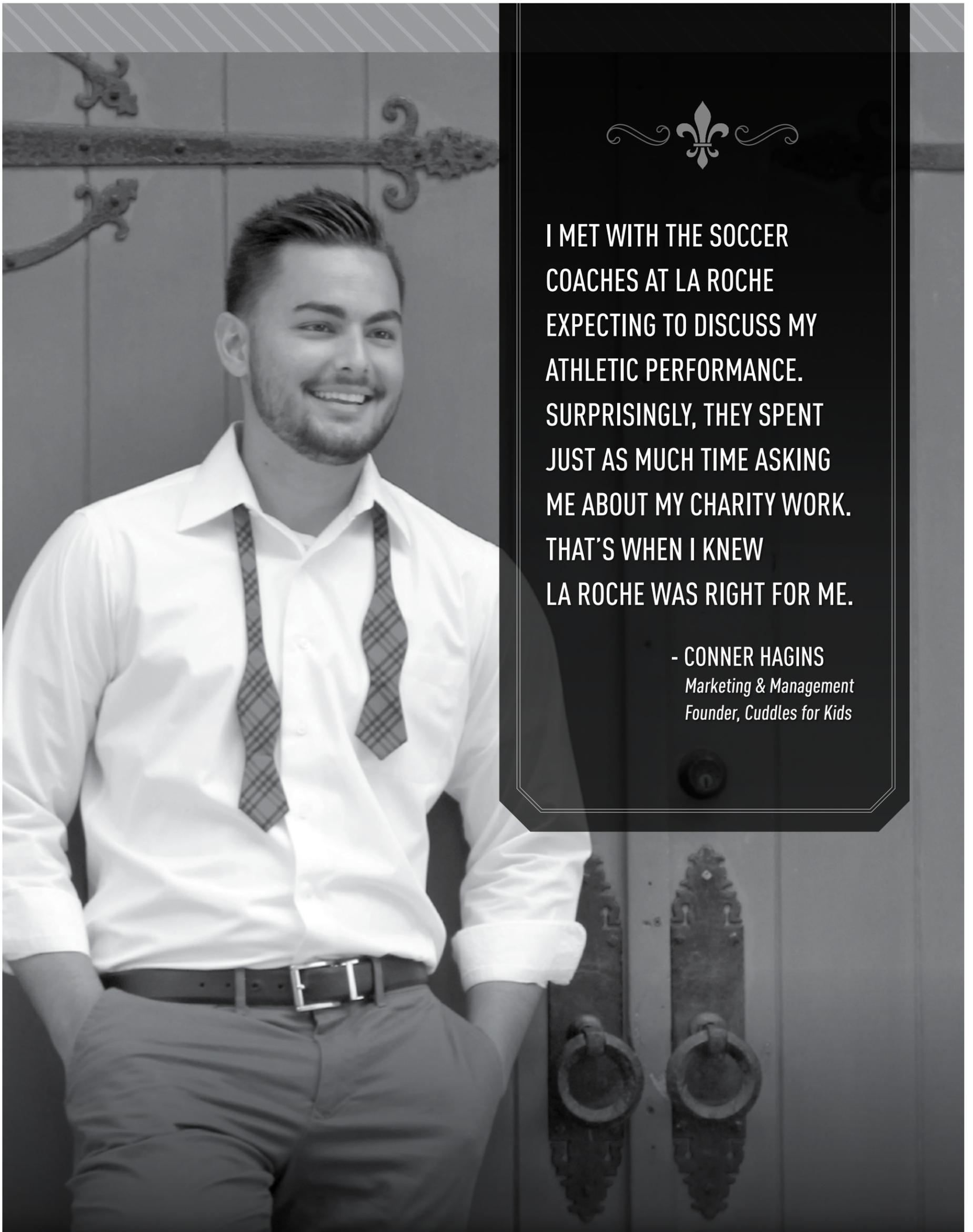
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I MET WITH THE SOCCER COACHES AT LA ROCHE EXPECTING TO DISCUSS MY ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE. SURPRISINGLY, THEY SPENT JUST AS MUCH TIME ASKING ME ABOUT MY CHARITY WORK. THAT'S WHEN I KNEW LA ROCHE WAS RIGHT FOR ME.

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Alumni softball game honors former principal

by Shannon O'Leary & Cece Robinson

On Sunday, October 9, the first annual Bill Suit Alumni softball game took place at Shaler Area's Hilltop Field. Organized by Gina Chmielewski and members of the Hall of Fame Committee, this game was held to honor a former high school principal, Bill Suit, who died of sarcoma three years ago.

"Bill was the principal for many, many years and everybody loved him. Kids loved him, administrators loved him, and teachers loved him. Even if you disagreed with him, you still realized he had everyone's best interest at heart. He was just a phenomenal guy and definitely a mentor to me and to a lot of other people," Chmielewski said.

Thirty-one softball players took part in this event in hopes of raising money for the Hall of Fame Scholarship that is awarded to an eligible senior each year. The participants covered a 30-year span of Shaler Area softball with graduates from the class of 1986 to the class of 2016.

The game's main purpose was to raise funds for the Hall of Fame Scholarship and the event did just that as it managed to raise \$1,559.50, which was far more than what was expected.

One of the most significant aspects of the game was the presence of Mr. Suit's wife, Sue. She was able to see the many alumni that were touched by her husband throughout the years and she even threw out a ceremonial first pitch.

"I think that was very touching and very sentimental for her. Obviously we do this for Bill, but to see Sue there and see the impact it had on her was very nice.



Participants in the Bill Suit Alumni Softball game

It was a great day," Chmielewski said.

The idea came about when Mr. Dave Fortun, member of the Hall of Fame Committee, approached Mrs. Chmielewski and asked for her opinion on the matter. After agreeing that it was a good idea, she naturally took charge of it.

"Since I am a coach and have been coaching softball in the district and I just figured I would be able to get in contact with a lot of the alumni that I coached before. Then I put it out on Facebook and we got pretty big interest for it," Chmielewski explained.

Due to its great success, Chmielewski hopes this becomes an annual event and next year they may even have a double header, with four teams involved to enable even more players to participate.

New serving area aims to get breakfast to students

by Maura Fisher & Tom Castello

In the fourth week of the school year, the high school opened a breakfast bar located in the concession stand outside of Gym A. The goal of the "grab and go" breakfast is to give students a meal in the morning when their time is limited.

"A lot of students don't have time to come down to the cafeteria to eat," said Francine Schmid, the Food Service Director at Shaler Area.

The breakfast bar hasn't been as successful as the cafeteria workers have hoped, but they believe that's due to the fact that many students aren't aware that it exists. The cafeteria has been trying to open a breakfast bar on the main level of the school for years. The goal is to be convenient for the students entering the building. They'll be able to get breakfast and then head straight to class.

However, the concession stand does not have the same equipment that the cafeteria has. Workers have to bring up food that was prepared in the cafeteria.

The "Got Milk?" company



provided the high school with two large mobile breakfast carts that can store hot food. One of the carts will be sent to the middle school, while the other will be kept at the high school.

"They're too big to fit in the elevator, so we're still trying to figure out a way to use them because we can't store them in the hallways," Schmid says.

The concession stand also lacks a student ID scanner for students to pay from their school accounts. The system of payment is based around honesty.

"We rely on honesty when you buy a breakfast from upstairs. You just write down your name and your account number and your account will be charged later," Schmid said.

Schmid hopes that the breakfast initiative will spread to all the schools in the district. The goal is to make breakfast more accessible to all students.

Program encourages students to pay attention to distractions

by Addeline Devlin & Davis Deasy

The Pennsylvania DUI association visited Shaler Area High School on October 5 for an assembly on distracted driving among teens.

The impact teen drivers assembly is held at schools all over Pennsylvania. The association's main focus is to inform teenage drivers on all dangers they could face at the wheel while a heavy emphasis is placed on texting and driving.

"I want to create awareness. If I can cause one person to think and prevent one crash by standing here for an hour, I would do that everyday of my life," Jim Gregg, presenter for the DUI association said.

Gregg is also a supervisor with the state police. He became involved with the DUI association as a presenter for the 2016-2017 campaign. After reviewing the material, he was compelled. He realized the importance of educating teenagers on the topic and agreed to help with the programs right away.

Gregg believes the assembly went extremely well. It went on for 45 minutes and consisted of videos of families affected by distracted driving deaths and activities calculating a student's chance of dying behind the wheel. A strong message was delivered to the students.

"I had several students come up to me and thank me which doesn't normally happen with young people, and that's worth the price of me showing up right

there," Gregg said.

The DUI association recently revised the "What do you consider lethal?" campaign which began a couple of years ago. The whole idea behind the campaign is to educate students that reckless and distracted driving among teens is their leading cause of death in America, but is 100% preventable.

"We are very proud of it. We continue to try and get people involved. This campaign started in conjunction with the Graduated License Program," Gregg said.

The Graduated License Program was designed to provide new drivers the proper experience needed, before taking on the road by themselves.

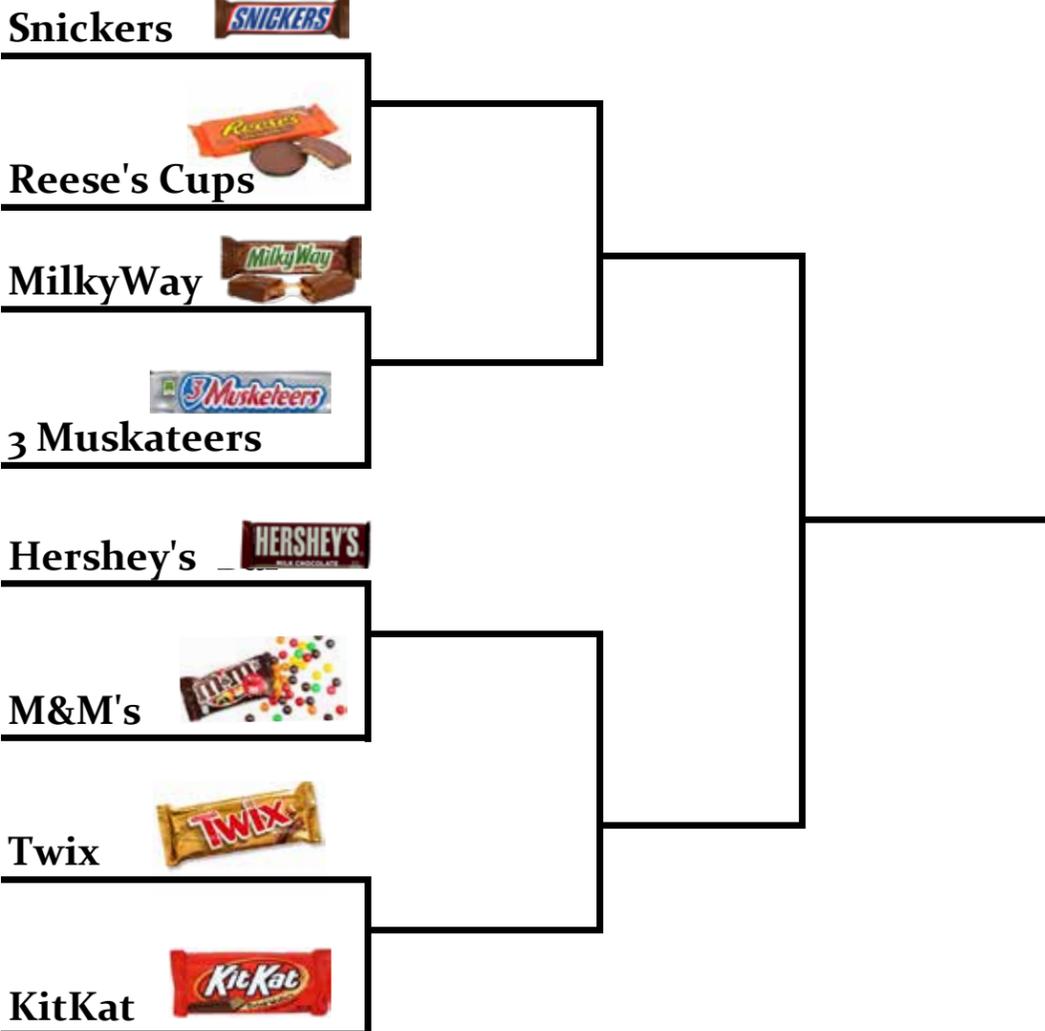
First, drivers receive a learner's permit for six months. This requires drivers under the age of 18 to drive with an adult over the age of 21 in the car. After six months, drivers can test for their intermediate license. This license comes with restrictions like curfew and number of passengers. Lastly, drivers can receive their adult license once they turn 18.

These programs and regulations are all behind the motive to eliminate as many distractions as possible. Since the start of the "What do you consider lethal?" campaign, there have been major decreases in things like drinking and texting while driving. However, there is still work to do.

"Even if we have a 25 percent decrease with texting and driving, it's still going to be the (leading cause of death in teens) which would just be insane because it is preventable," Gregg stated.

T H E B A C K P A G E

Best Halloween Chocolate



WEIRD News

****** A surveillance camera captured a crow fishing a bag of methamphetamine out of a Perth gas station's garbage can on Monday.

After hovering over the receptacle, it plucked out the illegal stash and dumped it next to a pump.

Two police officers from the West Australian capital Perth later pulled up at the station to fill their vehicle up with fuel and spotted the narcotics on the ground.

"The POI (person of interest) turned out to be a pesky crow who had fished the drugs out of a nearby rubbish bin," the department added.

Police seized the drugs and are trying to ascertain who dropped them off in the first place. Despite the serious nature of the discovery, officers still saw the funny side of the bizarre incident.

"That crow needs to get himself a lawyer," one of the officers says in the video.

****** An elderly woman left her car running in the parking lot so her two dogs could stay cool while she went in and shopped, but the apparently impatient dogs somehow knocked the car out of park, and it went rolling right into the front of the building.

Shoppers say the accident played out like a scene straight from a cartoon.

Surveillance video of the incident was released Monday night to WSAZ, showing the car rolling toward the building and onlookers headed to the car -- only to find a canine behind the wheel.

****** An upstate New York man thought he heroically saved his neighbor's dog when he broke into their home to save the pet from a burning house — but the blaze had been nothing more than an LSD-induced hallucination.

Michael Orchard, 43, was charged with burglary after police found him standing in front of what he believed to be a raging inferno with the animal in his arms.

"He believed that the residence was on fire and he was rescuing the dog," Trooper Mark Cepiel told the local network.

Orchard rammed his black BMW sedan through his neighbor's fence, broke in through the home's back door and went inside to rescue the family's large white dog.

DID YOU KNOW???

The fear of Halloween is called samhainophobia.

Halloween originated in Ireland.

Candy corn was originally called chicken feet.

A spider on Halloween means a loved one is watching.

The average American spends \$95 on an array of Halloween items and \$25 on candy alone.

| THE GRID | | What is the best excuse you have used to get out of school? | What is the most over played song on the radio? | What would you do if a clown approached you? | What is the strangest thing you received while trick-or-treating? | When is it acceptable to start the Christmas Season? |
|--|-------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
|  | Senior Mackenzie Muller | "I can't stand up; my back hurts!" | "Starboy" by the Weeknd | Probably run it over with my car. | Underwear | December 1 |
|  | Senior Bryce Fedak | "I have to walk my dogs...all day." | "Closer" by Chainsmokers ft. Halsey | Run away | Dental equipment | The day after Thanksgiving |
|  | Freshman Taylor Porter | "My dog looks sad." | "Heathens" by twenty one pilots | Pee myself | Toothpaste | December 1 |
|  | Freshman Nick Rispoli | "I haven't missed a day yet. Perfect attendance." | "Closer" by Chainsmokers ft. Halsey | I'd take a picture of it to post on Twitter. Then I'd call my boys to take care of it. | Q-tips | Whenever you want. Mid July! |