

# The Oracle

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## Class of 2005 grad running for Congress

by James Engel

Jerry Dickinson graduated from Shaler Area High School in 2005. Since then, he has done much with his life. From Pittsburgh, to South Africa, to New York, to Philadelphia, and back to Pittsburgh, Dickinson has compiled an impressive reputation.

With a unique background that helps to shape his policies, Dickinson is running for Congress in the 18th district of Pennsylvania, which he hopes to make an important voice in the House of Representatives.

Dickinson lived in foster care and was adopted at a young age. He lived in what he called, "a multiracial Brady Bunch family."

The experiences of his youth and the struggles of some of his siblings have had a permanent impact on him.

"Growing up, I've been intimately associated with poverty, and addiction, and incarceration, and joblessness, and homelessness, and the welfare system. These are my brothers and sisters who have been struggling... It has fundamentally shaped my worldview," Dickinson said.

Growing up in Shaler and understanding the people that live in the district also helped Dickinson to form some of his beliefs. He particularly remembers his time covering the Millvale Flood of 2004 for The Oracle, and meeting to people affected.

"We were doing all we could to go down to Millvale and Etna and help, but at the same time report on it, and report on it accurately," Dickinson said.

Following high school, Dickinson played Division I Soccer at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. He studied Sociology and Political Science.

Dickinson received his law degree from Fordham University in New York City. While there, he provided legal services to tenants that were being evicted from their apartments.

"We helped to defend poor, mostly Latina and African-American, single mothers that were being evicted in Harlem," Dickinson said.

Dickinson also served as a Clerk to Chief Judge Theodore McKee in Philadelphia. There, he helped formulate opinions on constitutional Law, civil rights, immigration, and criminal law.

"These decisions affected millions of Americans. It was a federal court, the next step from there is the Supreme Court," Dickinson said.

Dickinson then returned to Pittsburgh and prac-

ticed law at Reed Smith, a firm downtown. There, he helped to found an organization that helps defend evictees in court, free of charge.

"Attorneys would do pro bono work on behalf of poor tenants in Allegheny County who were being evicted from their homes. Essentially, we would team up and represent them," Dickinson said.

Currently, Dickinson is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh Law School, where he teaches Constitutional Law and Property Law.

Prior to that, Dickinson traveled to South Africa on a Fulbright scholarship to study the housing crisis in the nation.

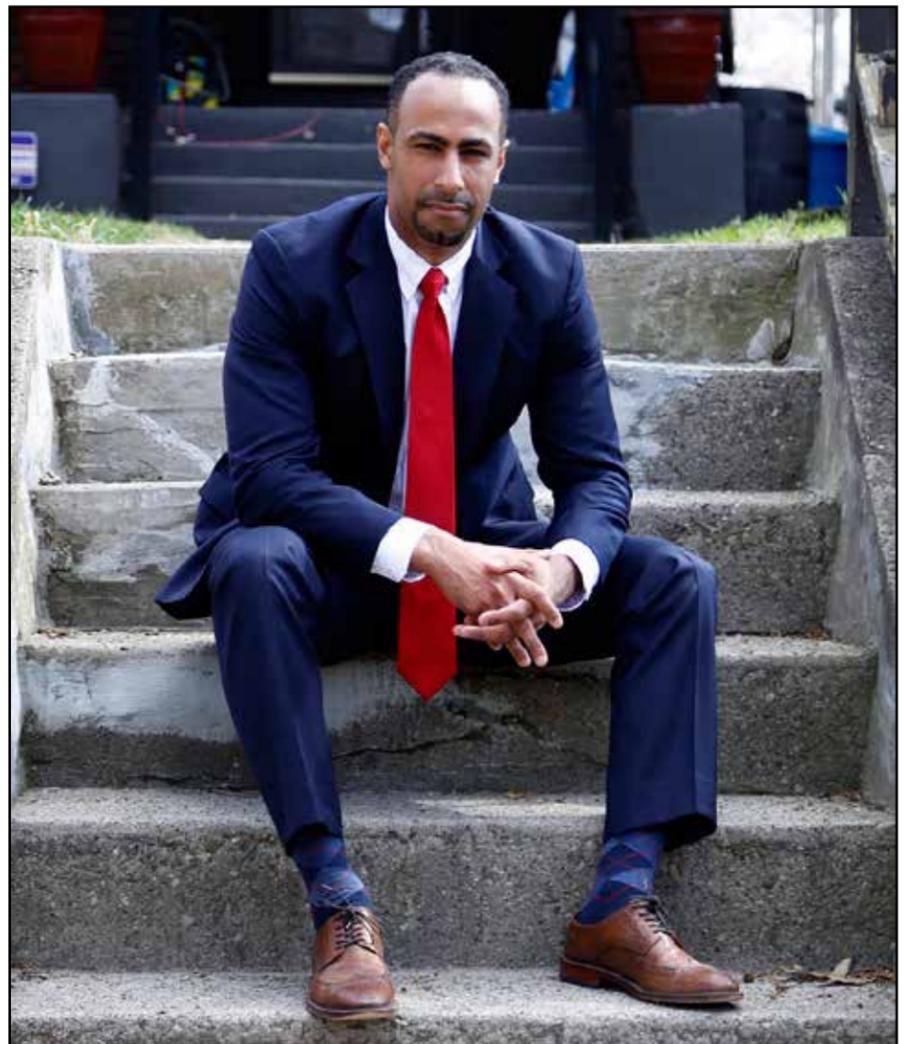
"I did research, and I worked alongside South African lawyers in representing and advocating for poor squatters in the slums and shanty towns of Johannesburg," Dickinson said.

His experience in property law shows in his politics. One of the most important issues on the Dickinson agenda is affordable housing.

Dickinson is a believer in tax credits for renters. Normally, in housing, these credits are reserved for homeowners exclusively, but Dickinson is seeking to expand this idea.

"If you are spending 25-30% of your annual household income on rent, you should get something back at the end of the year. So, one thing I propose to Congress is a renter refundable tax credit," Dickinson said.

Dickinson believes that the 18th District, which encompasses the city of Pittsburgh and some of the South Hills, needs to be a leader in the House of Representatives. Without the worry of being unseated by a Republican in reelection, Dickinson can focus on



Jerry Dickinson

truly progressive bills.

"Both sides, Republican and Democrat, have many old school incumbents that really are not really helping to move the needle on all the major issues, including the incumbent I am running against," Dickinson said.

With this progressive power, he hopes to immediately begin introducing bills, if elected.

"One of the first things I would do [in Congress] is have a bill in my hand that bans solitary confinement... I would reroute a lot of that money to rehabilitation," Dickinson said.

Other economic issues, such as minimum wage, are also found on Dickinson's agenda.

"Minimum Wage should be raised to \$15 per hour, immediately... the benefit of increasing it far outweighs the initial burden," Dickinson said.

**Cont. on page 6**

## Safety concerns create new procedure for entering SAHS

by Julia Falgione

This year, there has been a change in the way students have to enter the school. In years prior, all students who parked at the tennis courts or Matulevic could enter through the back doors. This year, those doors are locked and every student has to enter through the front, middle doors.

"The thought of funneling everyone in one door is really about creating a safer environment," Superintendent Mr. Sean Aiken said.

The most important thing to the district leaders is student safety and they truly believe that one point of entry will provide an extra amount of safety for the schooling environment.

"The more doors you have accessible, the more chance you have for intruders trying to get into these spaces," Aiken said.

Many schools around the country have been advised to transfer to one point of entry for the same reasons. Many school shootings and tragedies that have been happening in recent years are the main reason for so many schools changing security measures.

"The infrastructure of these buildings do not guarantee our security because they were built before our society changed so drastically," Officer Frank Spiker said.

Walking to the front of the school is frustrating, especially for the students parking near the tennis courts, but the safety benefits outweigh the inconvenience.

"If we control one point of access it is more secure for everyone here. You have things such as natural surveillance, where people are less likely to commit crimes if they think they will be seen," Spiker said.

Many are concerned when the winter will come around and it will be snowing and freezing every day. Officer Spiker said he will try as often as possible, when the weather is bad, to let us in the back door and let everyone in who is parked at the tennis courts. Already this year, during three rainy days Spiker was in the back letting all the kids in.

"I know it is not convenient, especially in the spring if you have to park at Matulevic and hilltop isn't open," Aiken said.

They know of the inconvenience that the change is causing, but will help as much as possible to make it easier for the students.

# OPINIONS

## Experience America at its very best, make a pilgrimage to a National Park

by James Engel

There are five pillars of Sunni Islam. These are the basic and essential beliefs that hold the religion together and provide some foundation for believers, similar to the way the Ten Commandments are treated in Judaism. The fifth and final pillar is what Muslims call "Hajj." Hajj translates to "pilgrimage" in English. The final pillar states that each person professing to practice Islam and who is financially able to, must, at least once in their life, travel to the city of Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammad. This trip shapes many young Muslim men into who they will become and how they will apply their faith.

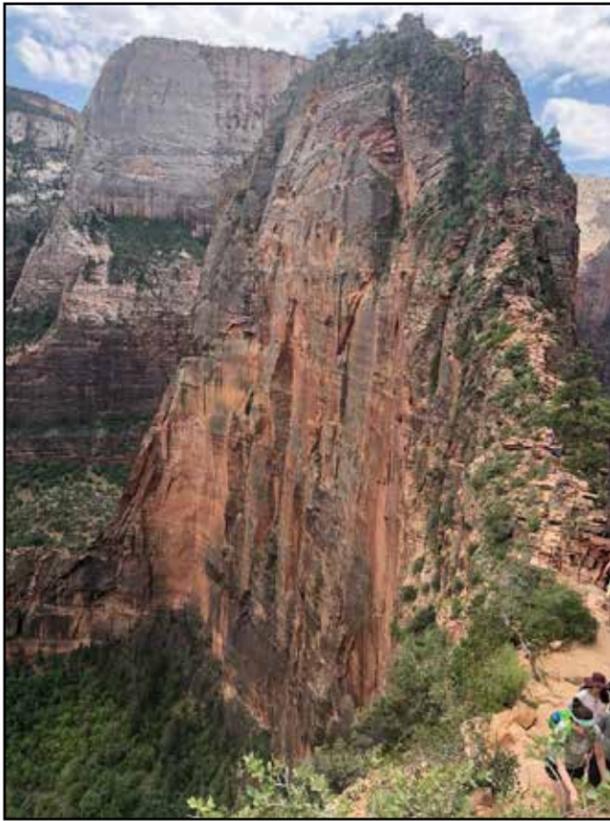
American culture lacks this idea of a pilgrimage, but I think it can be applied far beyond the bounds of organized religion. The western United States has some of the most serene and stunning landscapes of Earth, and to live a life without seeing some of this vast wilderness would be denying one's self the greatest privilege this country has to offer.

I can criticize American culture, government, economics, and policy endlessly, but the American landscape is unparalleled. There is no substitute for the West. There is nothing in Shaler, or for 1000 miles that could even compare to those stunning things. Although it was photographs that originally peaked my interest in exploring these areas, I soon learned that they could never begin to truly show these landscapes in their full glory.

This past summer I visited two national parks in southern Utah with my father, on our own pilgrimage. I spent two days in Zion National Park and one day, just north of there, in Bryce Canyon National Park. Those three days changed how I think about the world, and, by that, I mean the physical world itself. I did not know anything so utterly gorgeous could exist. But I do now, and so I am telling you, go. Please, go.

I am privileged for being able to make such a journey, not only financially, but also by having such a willing and enthusiastic father. I understand most are not in the same situation I was in, but every student will soon graduate and during the formative post-high school years there is no better place to see than the West. But as the Hajj states: Don't bankrupt yourself. Save some money, plan with friends, and during the summer go to nature for a few days. Every second will be worth it.

There is no atmosphere more refreshing than that of a national park. Just as all Muslims unite in Mecca,



Angel's Landing in Zion National Park (James Engel)

all people unite in nature. Every race, religion, nation, and gender is represented and everyone is there for one single purpose: to experience the land. They are united by rocks, trees, and waterfalls. I never witnessed a single conflict in my time at these parks, we were all simply mesmerized by what laid before our eyes. It was refreshing to breathe new air, and to walk on new dirt, and to touch new trees, and everyone felt this. Honestly, to try to put the experience into words would be wholly disrespectful to the feeling. Go, and feel for yourself.

In 1865, Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, said in an editorial, "Go West young man, go west and grow up with the country." Although his time has long since passed, the idea still remains. Just as Muslims are obligated to visit Mecca, each American should feel obligated to see the majesty of the western landscapes in our nation. See the buttes of Utah, the geysers of Wyoming, the Rockies of Colorado, the canyons of Arizona, the glaciers of Montana, the forests of Washington, or the sierras of California. There, beauty abounds. I encourage a new Hajj, an American Hajj, because a life in one place is no life at all.

## School assemblies need to be more impactful, meaningful to students

by James Engel

There are many hallmarks of the beginning of a school year; extended homeroom, school handbook presentations, signing multitudes of papers, iPad handouts, and, of course, anti-drug assemblies. Each year a new presentation is given to warn us of potential dangers of drugs and alcohol, but some are more successful than others. This year's "LEAD" assembly seemed to be particularly ineffective and ultimately crammed too much into the presentation while spreading dangerous misinformation.

By the title of the presentation, I assumed that the assembly would focus on leadership in high school and the importance of getting involved during your high school tenure.

Little did I know, that was one of the only subjects the speakers would not touch on. Simply stated, the presentation was too much. The speakers attempted to include drugs, alcohol, vaping, drunk driving, bullying, cyberbullying, and child pornography into about an hour.

If they wanted to truly make an impact on us they should have focused on the most important issues and delved deeper into those. Instead, the speakers seemed to say, "Don't do [bad thing]. Here's a video clip from the news to show you why."

This method was entirely ineffective. The drug and alcohol portion of the assembly seemed to simply list different narcotics and reiterate high school's golden rule, "Don't do drugs, and don't drink." It was nothing new

or profound, we've heard it in health class since elementary school.

— Cont on page 6

## One point of entry creates one point of contention

by Max Robinson

For as long as students have been driving to SAHS, they have had the ability to use the rear door for entry into the building. That has changed this school year.

Many of us were frustrated and perplexed as to why the school would lock the back door this year. It was never an issue before, so why change it?

According to both Superintendent Mr. Sean Aiken and Officer Frank Spiker, it was a security concern. School security is no joke in 2019, but I feel that the extra "security" is not truly worth the inconvenience. While the walk from the tennis court lot to the front isn't horrible, what about the students that are forced to park at Matulevic Field? How will they get into school on time without being tardy?

If there's severe or inclement weather, is it safe for students to be walking all the way to the front? Many students questioned why the staff at the back door couldn't just check IDs to let us in. After all, that would be more secure than the new one point of entry in the front, where anyone could just waltz in.

There is no true security measure in place in the front, other than locking all doors but the center one. For example, if there was an intruder or threat, he would be able to enter the building in the morning with no intervention. If there was an ID check system in place (in the front OR back), it would prevent anyone who does not attend this school from entering.

Officer Spiker said that SAHS simply does not have the security personnel to allow that to happen. This is quite odd, given we hired new security officers this year. One of them is stationed in the parking lot every morning.

He typically just sits on his phone, never checking passes or doing much of anything. I feel this parking lot guard would be much better suited at the back door, where he could check IDs and let students in the building. It would not be hard to do this, and it would create another level of security that is not seen upfront.

The back door has not been an issue for years, and there was no reason to change it. Locking it 24/7 is not the answer, and all of the students who drive would agree.

### The Oracle

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

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

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

# GATE students help rain garden become a reality

by James Engel

Next to the greenhouse, in the rear of the school, students will find a new feature to Shaler Area High School. The high school GATE program, along with Girty's Run Watershed Association and Deco Resources, has installed a rain garden for the benefit of the school's local environment. This garden will hopefully serve as an educational tool for students to learn about ecology and horticulture.

A rain garden is a generally small section of dug out soil that is used to capture water that would otherwise be runoff. This water is used by plants and can improve soil erosion and the quality of the landscape.

Shaler Area's GATE program is very involved with Fairchild competitions through Phipps Conservatory in Oakland. These competitions feature a variety of ecology-based ideas, and challenge students from different schools to develop plans for a greener and more sustainable plan for the future.

One of last year's challenges was called 'Green Storm Water Solutions.' It asked students to design a way to capture and use storm water at their high schools that would potentially be wasted.

Current juniors Jaime Eichmiller, Caitlin Fedorek, Alyssa Juzwick, Dakota Carr, and Olivia Jarzynka, along with current sophomores Anna Sheets and Rebecca Schiavone began to develop ideas for the project.

"The girls put together a big plan... part of that plan was to include a rain garden by the greenhouse," GATE sponsor Christina Palladino said.

To develop this plan, the team consulted Donna Pearson of the Girty's Run Watershed Association, a local conservation group based in Millvale.

"I provided resources and helped calculate runoff from an area and how to build a rain garden that could capture that amount," Pearson said.

Following this, Pearson applied for a grant through the Allegheny County Conservation District to make this hypothetical idea a reality.

"I found this grant... it seemed like a perfect idea because they had already started and put so much work into it," Pearson said.

The team was given the grant, worth over \$6,700, and began work on the physical implementation of the garden outside.

"We went out in the snow to measure the plot, it took a while, but ultimately, we got it," Fedorek said.

The GATE program then contacted Deco Resources, a landscape architecture



GATE students at the ground breaking for the rain garden by the greenhouse.

and environmental design firm based out of Pittsburgh.

Deco Resources began drawing schematics and plans for the placement of the garden, and eventually dug out what would become the garden's basic structure.

On October 25th, several of the GATE students collaborated with the owner of Deco Resources, Anthony Stewart, and Pearson to begin the planting process.

"We had a lot of fun learning about the different types of soil and planting the different flowers and bushes that we picked out," Alyssa Juzwick said.

The students chose a variety of plants native to Western Pennsylvania to inhabit the rain garden. The main feature is a spicebush that sits in the deepest part of the small depression. It is still a sapling, but will grow to become larger in scale.

The students hope that the new seeds and saplings will survive the winter, but to ensure the growth of Shaler's ecological interest, they are planning a second planting to coincide with Earth Day.

## SA eliminates class rank

by Julia Falgione

Starting this year, class rank has been abolished from Shaler Area. Before, class rank was a ranking of students based on many different factors like the amount of AP classes taken.

The district is using a new system, the collegiate Latin Honors System. There are three different levels in this system. Summa Cum Laude is the title reserved for the top 10%, Magna Cum Laude is the title for the top 20% and Cum Laude is the title for the top 30%. These rankings are based solely off of each student's weighted GPA at the end of senior year.

One of the biggest reasons, it seems, to get rid of class rank was the fact that apparently students were taking weighted classes to boost their GPA.

"I think every student should take art classes, tech-ed classes, or business classes, but sometimes because these courses are not weighted, students expressed they were avoiding those classes because they wanted the quality points to boost their rank," Royall said.

The idea to get rid of class rank has been talked about for many years and the decision was not made lightly.

"Many colleges do not even use class rank anymore, so we did a lot of

research to present to the board and central office," guidance counselor, Mrs. MaryBeth Miller said. "Many schools across the country have not been using class rank for years. Class rank is a very small picture of what a student can do."

One other thing this new system will affect is the people who will speak at graduation.

Before, the speakers at graduation were the valedictorian, the salutatorian and the class president. Now, without class rank, the speakers will be the class president, a representative voted by the top 10% and a "Student at Large" who must apply and then will be picked by administrators. The Student at Large can be anyone in the class.

There are some opposing opinions to getting rid of class rank.

"Getting rid of class rank eliminates any form of pride for hardworking students. Many of my peers have been working relentlessly for the past four years, taking AP and CHS classes because they chose to challenge themselves, NOT because they care about their GPA. The fact that I will not see their last names hanging in the auditorium is sad," senior Michaela Brining said.

Class rank in Shaler Area is still a controversial topic, especially for seniors, who are the first class to have this idea put into action.

**"Many schools across the country have not been using class rank for years. Class rank is a very small picture of what a student can do."**

**-- Mrs. MaryBeth Miller**

## Vaping continues to be a never-ending problem

by Max Robinson

Tobacco use has been a recurring issue in high schools for years. Today, many kids have chosen to vape, or "juul", instead of using traditional tobacco products, and it's become an epidemic. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 38 percent of 12th graders reported vaping the past year, a number that has jumped from 27 percent in 2017. Is the so-called "vaping epidemic" as bad in Shaler as it is in other schools and is there anything we can do to stop it?

"I do it to take the edge off. Sometimes you just need a quick buzz in school," one student said. "I need something that will make me relax, ya know?"

Numerous students who vape in school gave some excellent insight to the core of the issue.

"I don't think it's worth the risk, but I do it anyway," another said. "I've thought about quitting but I haven't yet."

They gave some varied answers when asked why they do it in school.

One said, "I'm addicted; I know it's not healthy, but I need it." Another gave it to me straight.

"I do it in school because it's fun, not because I'm a fiend."

The students all felt the risk was not worth the reward, but continue to do it.

"I don't see that [vaping] has slowed down at all," Principal Dr. Tim Royall said. "It's incredibly difficult to stop repeat offenders."

Royall's claims aligned with what the students told me. Royall suggested to the student body to, "do your own research [on vaping]", to determine if you really want to do it or not. Are the current vapers aware of the risks at hand?

"You'd have to be dumb to think [vaping] is harmless," one student gracefully told me.

The members of the student government also had plenty to say on the subject. "When I walk into the bathroom, there's just a mango fog," a sophomore rep said. She continued saying, "...it's gotten so bad they took the doors off the stalls." Royall countered this statement saying, "I would never intentionally remove a door for that reason..." One girl said that even secondhand 'vape' was an issue in the bathrooms.

"It's hard [to go to the bathroom] when my sinuses are burning when I walk in". The student government agreed that hiring more security staff or patrolling the bathrooms more often may be a potential solution.

No one had a fool-proof way to stop it, but I was reassured by Dr. Royall that the school was trying new ways to combat the issue at hand. At the same time, those that currently vape in school don't plan on changing their actions. "At the end of the day, I'm still gonna [vape] until I eventually get caught."

# The Oracle eats out at Condado Tacos

In this food review, members of the Oracle staff took a trip to Condado Tacos, which is located on Butler Street in Lawrenceville. Condado Tacos is a tasty, affordable option if you're looking for a taco restaurant that is close to home. Here are the staff member's overall reviews of the restaurant:

**Ashley:** This was my first time eating at Condado Tacos, and it definitely exceeded my expectations! The restaurant had a great atmosphere, with a bright and colorful interior as well as a good music selection. Before our tacos, we ordered chips, pineapple salsa, and queso blanco. The appetizers were exceptional! I ordered two tacos with the Sweet Lucy shell, which is a taco shell that contains both a flour soft and corn hard tortilla, along with queso and guacamole. The shell was very different, but it was delicious nonetheless. Additionally, I ordered the cilantro/lime aioli on my tacos and it was so tasty! The thing I enjoyed most about Condado was that the tacos were completely customizable and most of the toppings were free. Overall, I had a great experience at Condado. With the tacos starting at \$3.50, it is one of the more affordable restaurants in Pittsburgh and the food does not disappoint!

**Bailey:** I have never eaten at Condado Tacos before, but overall I would go again. It is located in Lawrenceville so parking can sometimes be an issue, but for us it was fairly easy. The atmosphere of Condado is super artsy with lights and graffiti covering the walls. The waiter we had was very nice and helpful since most of us had never been there before. We ordered an appetizer of the chips, queso, and pineapple salsa. The appetizers were fantastic; the queso was perfect with the chips and the pineapple salsa was also very good 5/5. We then ordered tacos, which were very good. However, once you started filling them up with toppings, it got to be a lot. The tacos were a 3/5. They would've been a lot better if we didn't eat two full plates of chips before-hand. The taco style was a fill-out sheet just like Burgertory, which was helpful because it was completely customizable. Overall, I would give it a 3.5/5.

**Steph:** I had never been to Condado before our family trip this past Monday, and needless to say, I was very impressed. The instagramability of the restaurant was at all-time high, colorful murals on the wall were the cherry on top for the millennial feel. The tacos were set up just like a make-your-own burger at Burgertory, listing options upon options of taco fillings. When places like Moe's and Chipotle have claimed the fast food Mexican food throne, it is important to do something that sets you apart from the rest. The options on the menu were never before seen twists on your favorite taco Tuesday traditions. I thoroughly enjoyed



the food and would recommend Condado to anyone.

**Julia:** This was my very first trip to Condado. Right off the bat, I would recommend it for anyone who likes tacos. Walking into the restaurant, the first thing you see are some bright-colored paintings over the entirety of the walls. Condado is a bar, so I assumed they may have some options for interesting non-alcoholic drinks. No, apparently they don't, because when I asked the waiter he responded with, "We have Pepsi products." Other than the lack of good drinks, the food was really good. I highly recommend the pineapple salsa. It was amazing. Also the crumbled bacon that is an option to get on the tacos were really good. All I have to say is do not get the rice, it is a waste of money. I would say

the overall experience was 3.5/5 stars.

**James:** I had been to Condado one time prior to The Oracle's visit. I enjoyed their food, but did not taste a wide variety of their menu. On this visit I consumed much more than I probably should have, but still enjoyed every bite. I started with the Chips and Queso. The chips are very fresh and crunchy, some of the best around. The queso is a creamy white sauce topped with Paprika and Jalapeno Peppers. Although I enjoyed it, I do not think it is quite up to par with other Mexican restaurants in the area. The highlight of my Condado visit was the chorizo, it is by far the best I've ever had. It was spicy and savory, I recommend trying it with the "Ju-Ju" shell, which is a hard shell and a soft tortilla with queso and chorizo in between. The chicken is juicy and perfectly suited for everyone. Overall, Condado is a wonderful experience and I cannot recommend it enough for anyone who enjoys Mexican food.

**Max:** I've been a fan of Condado for a few years now. We went to the Lawrenceville location. The wait staff and service were fantastic. All of us shared chips and queso blanco, which was great and reasonably priced. Most of us just ordered 2 tacos, which is usually my upper limit. The tacos are fully customizable: think Burgertory but tacos instead of burgers. They can be as stuffed or as plain as you want. I absolutely love the "Ju-Ju" shell, which is a soft shell and hard shell with chorizo and queso in between. My only gripe with Condado is that it is mainly a bar, so the menu is quite limited. If you don't like tacos, don't go. It can get very busy on weekends and at night, so go early to avoid the crowds.

If you're in Lawrenceville, The Oracle staff would recommend you make a stop for something to eat at Condado Tacos.

THE GRID		What's your favorite fast food restaurant?	Thoughts on avocados. 	favorite shoes.	Best fast food burger. 	How do you like your steak cooked? 
<b>Freshman</b> <b>Angie Antonucci</b>		Chipotle	Good, but I hate the stringy things.	My white Vans that I wear almost everyday.	Impossible Burger from The Cheesecake Factory.	I. Don't. Eat. Meat.
<b>Sophomore</b> <b>Nathalie Olejarz</b>		Wendy's 	I love them.	Converse.	Any burger from Wendy's.	Well done.
<b>Junior</b> <b>Stephanie Le</b>		Wendy's	love them a lot, (especially on toast) periodt.	Converse. 	In 'n Out.	Medium rare.
<b>Senior</b> <b>Steve Jones</b>		The Millvale Steakhouse. 	They're interesting, but hyped up too	All black Air Force One's, midtop.	A Royale with cheese.	I wanna hear the cow mooing, but just warm enough that I dont get a disease.
<b>Faculty</b> <b>Mr. Tim Taylor</b>		WacArnold's	They're Guacamole balls.	Crocs 	Whopper WITH CHEESE	Still mooing. 



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# Alumnus running for Congress

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Dickinson has also used his knowledge of property law to study the Trump administration's policies, specifically the border wall proposal.

The Washington Post published an editorial by Dickinson, explaining the issues behind the wall, in its Sunday edition.

"The discourse mainly centered around, 'Is this moral?', or 'Is this immoral?', but people hadn't thought, 'How are we going to get the land?', a significant chunk of the land along the border is owned by private landowners," Dickinson said.

Climate change is also high on the Dickinson agenda. He believes that Pittsburgh's transformation can serve as an example in the House.

"We should be the leaders on climate change, given our post-industrial pollution regulations," Dickinson said.

Dickinson has been campaigning on these ideas since April of 2018. He has spoken at numerous events at schools, churches, and union halls. With his ideals, policies, and youthful energy Dickinson hopes to win the Democratic primary election on April 28th.

There is still much left to do, but with Dickinson's unique background in Shaler and his vast experience throughout the world, Dickinson has leadership and knowledge that is needed in Congress.

"What we are doing in this campaign is articulating a vision in a district that previously lacked one," Dickinson said.



# Assemblies must be impactful

from page 2

This is not even mentioning the blatant misinformation spread by this part of the presentation. The speakers attempted to tell us that all drugs cause flashbacks. This is a lie and a scare tactic that should not be believed. Hallucinogens like LSD can cause flashbacks in very rare cases, but to say, as the speakers did, that drugs like marijuana can cause flashbacks is a blatant lie.

In fact, when I and several of my peers questioned one of the speakers after the assembly about this information, he admitted that non-hallucinogenic drugs **cannot** cause flashbacks. Although he added, "We would like you to believe that they do."

The vaping section of the presentation was more comical than anything. We were told that vaping companies target us with fun flavors that we will ultimately become addicted to. Sure, fair point, but is this stopping anyone? Showing us flavor names like "Unicorn Milk" isn't going to make fiends stop in their tracks.

If anything, I heard of my peers seeking out this new mystical flavor of e-juice. The substance portion of the assembly seemed to be an utter flop, and these concepts were better explained by our health teachers.

The bullying section was the same somber tale we're told every year. A student was bullied, and unfortunately ended their life as a result. These news stories are troubling and awful, but is scaring us with suicide an effective way to halt bullying? Is showing YouTube clips from late night news going to halt the root of problems of bullying?

This is not to say that there should not be assemblies devoted to these issues. They are important issues that need to be addressed, but the way the LEAD presenters went about it was not the right way to do it.

The best assembly on issues like these was in my sophomore year.

The mother of a young woman who died of a heroin overdose came in and told us how her daughter descended into a cycle of addiction.

She showed us pictures of her daughter when she was our age, and talked about her struggles with pain pills that eventually became a heroin addiction.

The mother talked about how her life had changed since the death of her daughter and involuntarily cried while she said it. The auditorium was silent for her. Every soul in the room listened. She wasn't trying to scare or deceive us.

She simply told us her story and how drugs destroyed not only her daughter's life, but her own. That assembly had real impact, real preventative power that LEAD's utterly lacked.

Why not have more assemblies like that one? These assemblies should consist of real people telling real stories about what happened to them and how to help people that are currently going through similar issues.

Rather than showing us a news clip of a young student that committed suicide, invite those affected by the issue. Have people who were bullied come in and speak to us about their struggles and how they overcame them. A PowerPoint with YouTube clips simply cannot do justice to the importance of the issues we face.

The LEAD assembly and its five D's ultimately failed the student of Shaler Area. Not one issue was given the justice it deserved, and the misinformation and scare tactics used by the speakers were disappointing.

I hope that the district considers bringing in guest speakers similar to that amazing mother, but until then I doubt much change will be made to the minds of myself and my peers.

But hey, at least we got a free donut.



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# Seven new members inducted to Athletic Hall of Fame

## Tom Gralewski

Tom competed on both the Shaler Area Varsity Baseball and Football teams, earning 3 letters in each sport and being selected as each team's MVP. His baseball accomplishments include leading the WPIAL in RBIs his senior season and being named 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Section and 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-North. Tom played in 2 WPIAL Championship games. Tom currently serves as an assistant coach of Shaler Area's Varsity Baseball Team.

## Brian Junker

Brian's four varsity letters in baseball and three varsity letters in football only begin to tell how dominant he was in both sports for Shaler Area. As an inside linebacker, he led the Titans with 118 tackles as a junior and was twice named to the All-Conference Team. On the diamond, Brian's 82 career hits rank him among the all-time Titan hit leaders. He was selected three times to the All-Conference Team. His baseball success continued at Edinboro where he is the school's career hit leader, a member of its All-Time Baseball Team. He is currently the Shaler Area Varsity Baseball Coach, leading the team to a WPIAL Championship last season and being named WPIAL Coach of the Year.

## Abi May

Abi earned 11 varsity letters while competing on the Shaler Area Varsity Cross Country, Swim, and Track and Field Teams. In cross country, Abi was a four-time WPIAL Qualifier. As a swimmer, she set the school record for the 100 meter butterfly, which she held for 12 years. In this same event, Abi was a four time WPIAL Qualifier, a winner of three WPIAL Medals, and a three-time PIAA Qualifier. She was the swim team's MVP in 2005 and 2006. In track, Abi was an important part of the 4x800 relay team that set and held the school record from 2003-2012.

## Peggy Ruefle

Peggy can best be described as an all-around athlete, competing in basketball, volleyball, and softball in both high school and college. She earned nine varsity letters as a high school athlete and was



**Shaler Area Athletic Hall of Fame 2019 inductees**

**Standing:** Bryan Smetanka, Brian Junker, Rick Saulle, Tom Gralewski  
**Seated:** Peggy Ruefle, Steve Truban, Abi May

voted by her peers as Shaler Area's Best Female Athlete in 1977. Peggy's prowess on the basketball court earned her the distinction of being selected to play in the Colt Classic, an all-star game featuring the best female players in the Pittsburgh area.

## Rick Saulle

Rick lettered three times while playing goalkeeper for Shaler Area's Varsity Soccer Team. He currently holds school district records for most shutouts in a season with 15 and fewest goals allowed in a season with 7, and his 23 career shutouts places him 2<sup>nd</sup> on the all-time list. Rick continued playing soccer at Elizabethtown College where he was a member of their 1989 National Championship Team, a four-year letterman, and a 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Conference selection in 1992.

## Bryan Smetanka

Bryan earned seven varsity letters while competing on the Shaler Area Varsity Football, Basketball, and Baseball teams. As team captain and quarterback in 1994, Bryan led the WPIAL in passing with 2,289 yards, which included 25 touchdown passes. He was named to the All-Conference Team, the *Post Gazette's* Fabulous 22 Team, and the exclusive All-State Team.

## Steve Truban

Steve earned four varsity letters in both football and basketball at Etna High School. His greatest impact on athletics, however, came as a school board director when Etna, Millvale, Reserve, and Shaler merged and formed the Shaler Area School District. *(biography info compiled by Mr. Mark Connelly)*

# New laws finally gets athletes what they deserve: money

by Dominic DiTommaso

Things are starting to heat up in one of the country's hottest states, and the humidity has managed to find us all the way over here.

The state of California has signed the "Fair Pay to Play" act which allows college athletes to make money from the use of their names, images, and likenesses.

This is good.

But not good enough.

The extreme heat that reaches the west coast has reached a boiling point in me, as there is a crime going on, currently, in sports. It is unconstitutional that we prevent kids, supremely talented kids, who are playing supremely violent games, from earning any money three years out of high school other than room, board, and tuition. The fact that college players, specifically college football players, have to risk their entire professional careers, for three years, and get nothing for it but scholarship money is un-American.

You get scholarship, but so what? These athletes get a free ride to school, but they deserve so much more than that.

So this bill is getting us slowly to where it needs to get, but it's not quite there.

Dabo Swinney recently signed a 10-year contract paying him over \$9 million a year, and to me, he's underpaid. To me, he's worth twice that much. He has gathered millions and millions of dollars from major donors and boosters and alums from the University of Clemson. He was taken the Tigers to three

National Championship Games in four years, including two wins.

And yet, Dabo would be nothing without all his players, all his stars, who play for him. The players are "forced" to play for him, for three years, and that in itself is unconstitutional. But the point is, Dabo's players are getting nothing while he gets everything, yet he would be nothing if it wasn't for Trevor Lawrence and Travis Etienne and Justyn Ross and all his athletes.

I say that's wrong.

Now, I often sit back and wonder how valuable these athletes actually are. For instance: how much is Trevor Lawrence worth to Clemson right now? They just won the National Championship! I'd say that's pretty valuable! Was he worth five million dollars to Clemson last year? This year? How about more than nine million dollars like his coach Dabo Swinney? Yep. I believe he's worth it.

Even though it may seem like an exaggeration, it's just how valuable these players are to these institutions and the NCAA at large.

College sports love to sell to their donors and boosters and alums, and even current students, that this amateur athlete or that amateur athlete sat in the very same seat that you once sat in, or currently sit in. They used to sit in the very same classroom you used to sit in, or currently sit in, at Alabama or Georgia or Ohio State. Schools are essentially "using" these players to enhance their program and bank account. I bet USC loves saying "Hey, Reggie Bush once sat in that very seat!". And Reggie gets... nothing.

What a joke.

And not a funny one.

How about this: before the 2017 NFL Draft, the University of Michigan's Jake Butt tore his ACL in the bowl game, and what happened? He plummeted in the Draft all the way to the first pick of the fifth -- FIFTH -- round before John Elway said, "Enough of this", and took him for Denver. I liked Jake as a player, and he easily had a second-round grade on him. And he lost a lot of money, did Jake.

That's a Wolverine-sized bite that hurts.

So these college athletes are risking everything for nothing.

I've heard this suggestion thrown out before, and a lot have laughed over it, but what if, what if, there were no rules in college recruiting?

What if a school could get their donors, their boosters, to pay whatever they wanted for a top recruit?

What if these schools could bid for a Trevor Lawrence, or a Tua Tagovailao, or a Jalen Hurts or a Jonathan Taylor?

Obviously these schools still have their scholarship limits, so they can only have so many players that they're going to recruit each year, but what would happen? What if they could offer any of the above players a three-year deal for eight million dollars?

Programs would do it, because some boosters really love their football.

Year after year, I pound my fist on my table, demanding that the NCAA comes to its senses and rid us of this injustice

Maybe now, someone will listen.