

The Oracle

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Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

April 2011

School district trying to deal with budget crisis

by Anna Porter & Samantha Raible

On March 8 Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett gave his annual budget address. This address delivered the news that public school administrators and educators across the state had feared -- significant cuts to education were being made. Shaler Area school district is now faced with a \$2 million deficit, as school board officials search for a solution to this problem.

Superintendent Dr. Donald Lee had been aware that this "day of reckoning" was coming. "We had an inkling it was happening, but we didn't know the exact numbers," he said. "We knew something bad was coming, we just didn't know how bad."

Because of Shaler's high enrollment rate and relatively moderate wealth, the district will see approximately a \$2 million less in its 2011-12 budget compared to this year's. There were many expenses that filtered in to this \$2 million loss. One of the largest was charter school tuition. Each year, Shaler pays

about \$1 million dollars in order to send kids to charter and cyber schools. The school had been promised a \$250,000 reimbursement for these expenses.

However, now with budget cuts being made the school will not be receiving that money. Along with charter school funds, Basic Education Funds (BEF) has been taken away. This was government funded money that went out to each school district based on its size and wealth; each school district received the same amount each year.

In order to make up for this lost amount, Shaler administration is trying to find areas where it can cut back. 28 teachers and 10 support personnel are retiring this year, and a majority of them will not be replaced.

Dr. Lee made a proposal to the school board this past Monday which called for only replacing 7 of the retiring teachers in the district.

"We're looking at the retirees positions and hopefully that if we can eliminate some of them, but not all of them, we will be able to balance the budget and no individual person will lose their

job," Dr. Lee said.

Replacing one teacher would save the district approximately \$30,000. However, if that teacher's position is not replaced, the district would then save around \$100,000. If all 27 teachers who are retiring are replaced, the school would save approximately \$800,000. Before the state budget had been revealed, administrators believed that this would be enough money to cover lost funds. Unfortunately, now that is not the case.

According to Governor Corbett, "we all must be prepared to tighten our belts." This tightening will not only affect education, but sports and activities as well. Dr. Lee has asked each department to reduce its spending by 10-15% compared to previous years.

"When Dr. Lee and I met, we discussed cutting back on the number of clubs we offer, the number of intramural sessions, eliminating the uniform budget, and we looked at overlapping positions," Activities director Mrs. Mindy Thiel said.

Athletics director, Mr. Paul Holz-

shu, commented, "[Athletics] will be affected in two major areas; first it will be affected in the monetary values of our budget. I've been asked to look at a reduction of about 10% in equipment and supplies. And secondly, there is a strong likelihood that maybe some supplemental coaching positions may be temporarily unavailable to us," he said. "This district feels that athletics is still a vital part of the education process at all levels."

A last resort would be to raise taxes. By law, the district can raise taxes by half a mill, however, that would only generate \$750,000.

By June 30th, the proposed budget from Governor Corbett will be decided. However, this will not be a one year ordeal; the impact will last for years to come.

"I think it's several years that we are going to have to plan," Charles Bennett, the Director of Business Affairs, said. "We're going to be very diligent. It's very easy to add but it's so hard to subtract. We are going to have to be very careful as the year unfolds."

FBLA members compete at conference

by Amity Hudak

On April 4-6th, six Shaler Area High School students travelled to Hershey, Pennsylvania to compete in the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference as a part of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). One student, senior Melissa Dorow qualified to compete in the national competition which will take place in Orlando, Florida.

"Melissa competed in the Sports Management section. She and the other competitors in the field all took a test. The top 10 scorers were called on to states. All of the students were then lined up on the stage and they began to start reading down the list of the names of those who scored 10th, 9th, 8th, etc on the test," FBLA advisor

Mr. Ron McAdams said. "The list was being read down and Melissa was up there for a very long time. It got down to the point that first place was between her and another girl. It turned out that Melissa got second place. The top three scorers then qualify for the national competition."

McAdams had high hopes for all competitors, but Dorow was not expecting to place so high.

"I was surprised to be in the final two considering how little I prepared for the event. I was also really excited to hear that I qualified for nationals because it was so unexpected," Dorow said.

These six students achieved the ability to compete in the state competition through their impressive performance in the Regional Leadership Competition, which took place in December. At Hershey, there were well over 4,000 students competing. The top three students in each category qualify

for the national competition.

"Everyone did a great job, but it was especially nice to see Melissa place so high in the competition and get that recognition for herself and for the school as well. Since it was a statewide competition, there were plenty of schools I had never even heard of and I'm sure they've never heard of us either," McAdams stated.

Within the three short days the students were gone, there was plenty for them to do and they were all extremely busy.

"We shared a bus with Pine Richland students that were going on

to compete in the competition as well. Monday and Tuesday were the competition days. Also, there were a lot of workshops going on that provided presentations and a great guest speaker to all students," McAdams said. "We were very busy the whole time and there wasn't much down time. Since we were in Hershey, on Monday before the competition began we went on a tour of Chocolate World. On the final day, after the lengthy awards ceremony there was a dance for the kids, which was extremely nice."

This was the first year that the FBLA had been organized in a few years. There was a great amount of success generated from it. The member's and Dorow's success is impressive. The Pennsylvania Leadership Conference was a success for the Future Business Leaders of America members of Shaler Area High School.



FBLA Members who competed in states (Mr. McAdams)

School aids Japan

by Holly Doerfler

On March 11, an earthquake struck the coast of Japan with an amazing strength. It left people shaking long after it was over. Soon after the quake, 30-foot waves began forming and washing away buildings, homes, and the lives of innocent people.

The 2nd floor GATE office came up with many ideas. "The Great Pokémon Race," put together by Matt Kinol, raised a total of \$375 dollars.

"I severely underestimated how generous people were. We thought we'd need a gimmick to raise money but I was surprised with the outright generosity," Kinol said.

"Students spent a lot of time baking, making bookmarks, and raising money. It is amazing to know that our school came together to help people from another country. This is further proof of how great Shaler really is," Ms. Hilary Domencic, 2nd floor gate teacher, said.

Additionally, the Art Honors Society designed bookmarks to sell, while the Japanese Honors Society held a bake sale during lunches. Another collection that was taken was the buckets that were taken from class to class during 9th period, which students could give money to.

The total of that collections was \$2,455.

Teacher Throwdown: Gaul vs. Anke

Literature and Economics teachers go head-to-head in an effort to display their differences

by Kelsey Meehan

What's more important: English or Econ?

Gaul: English, undoubtedly. Anyone who considers econ to be a science is just kidding themselves. English is the ability to have ideas and to be able to express those ideas.

Anke: I can appreciate the value of English, but econ is essential. For seniors who have taken twelve years of English, that one year of econ is imperative.

What is the biggest problem our country is currently facing, in your opinion?

Gaul: We've generally lost the ability to listen to each other. People with different opinions don't seem like they can even get along. It's indicative that we only want our own ideas to be heard and that we don't want to grow.

Anke: The sense of entitlement that everyone seems to have. People expect that they should just have things given to them without work. Equal opportunity does not mean equal outcome.

If you could enact one rule into the high school, what would it be?

Gaul: It wouldn't be a new rule, but the school needs a coffee shop. It would have to be big enough to have class in it. It would be so much cooler to have AP class with coffee.

Anke: No whining.

If you could change one thing about the Constitution, what would it be?

Gaul: It's too easy to say the 2nd Amendment, isn't it? Actually, I'd change the drinking age. I believe that it's more important for teens to learn to drink responsibly than to make it into a "you'll turn into a frog if you touch it" type of thing.

Anke: I would make sure it was enforced. Actually, I would enact stricter wording of the Commerce Clause so that it couldn't be used to justify big government activity.

How do you feel about Mr. Anke's alma mater, PITT?

Gaul: I've had way too many really good students go there for me to really knock it down. Now Duquesne, on the other hand...

How do you feel about Mr. Gaul's alma mater, Northwestern?

Anke: Well, it's in Chicago. Everything that comes out of Chicago is perfect and wonderful. (WINK)

How do you feel about the Pirates? Winning season this year?

Gaul: I'm a diehard fan. They've significantly improved, but they can improve significantly and still be pretty awful.

Anke: I hope that they'll do well, but they've broken my heart too many times to invest anything in them. I feel like a dog that's been beaten too many times.

In your opinion, what college has the best fight song?

Gaul: University of Wisconsin's "On Wisconsin"

Anke: Notre Dame. It's just very easily recognized. I do like Hail To Pitt, though, especially when it's sung as P-I-T-T, P-I-T-T, Penn State Sucks.

Hypothetically, if you were in a fistfight against each other, who would win?

Gaul: Me, definitely. He presents more of a target and I'm sneaky. This would probably have been a better question for both of us about fifteen years ago.

Anke: Me. I have the reach on him. It would never happen though.

Who would win in a fight, Sarah Palin or Hillary Clinton?

Gaul: Hillary. You don't mess with her. I mean, if Sarah could bring her moose gun, that might tip the odds a bit...there's actually a hell of a lot more chance of this fight ever happening than the fistfight between Anke and me.

Anke: Sarah, definitely. Sarah Palin could kill a moose with her bare hands, and she probably already has. If Hillary could find a way to use her voice, she could probably paralyze Sarah, but I'm going with youth over age for this one.



Mr. Gaul and Mr. Anke face off (Kelsey Meehan)

Shaler alumni reflect on their high school experiences

by Vince Lamana

Upon graduation, students think they are ready to take on their college life. But how well does Shaler Area prepare students for post-high school life? Does Shaler really give students the tools they need to succeed in today's world?

"When I left for school, I thought I was ready and prepared for college because of Shaler Area and academically that was the case. I think that I wasn't prepared for the amount of work and the expectations of the professors," Shaler 2009 graduate Katie Niebel said.

However, many of the skills learned in high school can be a benefit in college.

"Now that I'm in college, I realize that everything I learned at Shaler I have used again," Shaler 2009 graduate Amanda Schutzman said.

Although you will still be using high school skills, college is a totally different ball game. The biggest academic difference is the course load and the expectations.

"The closest (experience) I had to a college class was AP US History. That was one of the few classes I took at Shaler that was comparable to a college course," Shaler 2008 graduate Sam Vecenie said. "Do

I think there were other students at Ohio State much better prepared than I was? Yes, definitely."

Then how do you prepare students for college?

"Shaler students could always use a bigger challenge, especially academically. Teachers should be pushing students to aspire to academic endeavors that were once thought impossible to achieve," Shaler 2005 graduate and Fulbright Scholar Jerry Dickinson said.

It is up to the students to make the most out of their high school career and make an effort to learn.

"I think it's really up to the individual student to take classes that are challenging and serve as good preparation for college. If you don't take high school seriously, it doesn't matter what the school district's curriculum is like," 2006 Shaler graduate Liz Rekowski said. "I would have studied more. In high school I didn't really need to study for good grades, but in college, no matter how smart you are, studying is vital to success."

The majority of students that were interviewed did note that the curriculum here at Shaler was up to par. The responsibility lies with the students and teachers here. Many students also said that for the most part, Shaler prepared them well for academic college life and they didn't feel inferior to other students in col-

lege.

They noted that when it comes down to it, it's up to the teachers to execute the curriculum correctly, and the students to take an active role in their education. It is a two way street: the teachers can do everything they can to teach, but without the interest of the students, nothing will be produced, and vice versa.

"A lot of experiences in school, just as in life, are what you make of it. Although there are plenty of teachers at Shaler who are willing to point students in the right direction, there are others who are there simply to earn a paycheck," Dickinson said.

Even with that proper help, college is entirely different than high school. There is only so much Shaler can do to prepare you. Shaler can't tell you to get up every morning; Shaler can't teach you to do laundry or cook.

"College is a completely different world than high school. You are in charge and you are the one who ultimately makes sure things are done. Time management is key because you don't have to ask mom and dad's permission to go places or hangout with your friends. You also have to make time for meals and laundry and everything else you need to get done on top of your schoolwork," Niebel said. "You have to grow up."



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Senior headed to Naval Academy

by Stephen Kimpel

As spring is here and the college search is winding down for many high school seniors, one Shaler Area student has set herself apart in her future college education. Next year senior Kari Nogacek will be taking her talent and hard work to Annapolis, Maryland after being accepted to the United States Naval Academy.

This is no mere acceptance into a university. According to collegeboard.com the US Naval Academy only accepts eight percent of all applicants. While it is quite an accomplishment for Nogacek to be admitted into the Naval Academy, she has put in a lot of work in order to succeed.

"I stayed involved in sports and tried to make my grades as best as I could. I also needed to have leadership roles, so I volunteered for positions in National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. The academy looks for well-rounded individuals, so I tried to do a little bit of everything as best as I could," Nogacek responded.

The Naval Academy is turning into a family affair for the Nogacek family. Her older sister, a Shaler graduate, also went to the Naval Academy.

"We were down at the Academy a lot. It almost became like a second home for us. I knew that if I applied and actually got in the Academy, that is the place where I was supposed to go," Nogacek explained.

Nogacek attributes a great deal of her decision to the legacy her older sister has created.

"I admired what she was doing. I came to realize I could do the same with my life," she said.

Even though Nogacek has familiarity with the campus and strong family ties in the Academy, she will receive no special treatment while enrolled in



Kari Nogacek (Stephen Kimpel)

the college.

"For the first eight weeks I have plebe summer, which is the Academy's form of boot camp. After that, I go to college for four years, graduate with a four-year degree and become an officer in the Navy or Marines and then serve five years as payback [for the education]," Nogacek explained.

Nogacek did not point to the rigorous physical regiment of the Naval Academy as the biggest foreseen hardship she will face.

"The biggest struggle will definitely be leaving my family and friends. Everything will be completely different and will take a while to get used to," Nogacek expressed.

DiNardo gets chance to host a radio show

by Kelsey Meehan

When Shaler Area junior Frank DiNardo emailed WRCT radio station to tell them that he was interested in helping out around the station, he did not expect to end up with his own radio show. However, that is exactly what he got.

After being trained as a DJ by the station and then passing an air clearing test to prove that he could handle being on the air by himself, DiNardo was presented with two hours of air time every Monday night; this time became the "Super Awesome Radio Show with Frank DiNardo".

"I get to expose really good music to a large audience who probably would never have heard it without my show."

-- Frank Di Nardo

"About 75% of the show is music, and the other 25% is mainly me introducing songs, giving public service announcements, and talking about the calendar of events. I play mainly independent music. It's good music that's not really played on mainstream stations," DiNardo said.

As a junior in high school with his own radio show, DiNardo is certainly making steps toward success. Though he does not intend to pursue radio broadcasting in the future, he does hope to study music production in college. For now, however, DiNardo is simply enjoying having his own air time.

"I get a lot of free stuff like t-shirts and posters, and I also get to meet a lot of different bands. People call in to the station a lot too, and surprisingly, I get a lot of calls from the jail. They'll call and say they're calling from Allegheny County Jail and they have a song request and a shout out for their friend with a really weird nickname. Sometimes the songs are way too vulgar for me to play, so I'll just apologize and play another song for them," DiNardo said.

DiNardo's show, which has attracted listeners from all over the area and of all ages, is played on WRCT Pittsburgh, 88.3 FM. For DiNardo, the show is simply a way to introduce new, independent music to people who are looking for good music not necessarily played on more popular radio stations.

"It's cool because I feel somewhat responsible for their success because they were played on my radio station. My favorite part of having my own show is that I get to play such a vital role in the success of some of my favorite bands, and I get to expose really good music to a large audience who probably would never have really heard it without my show. That's pretty awesome," DiNardo said.



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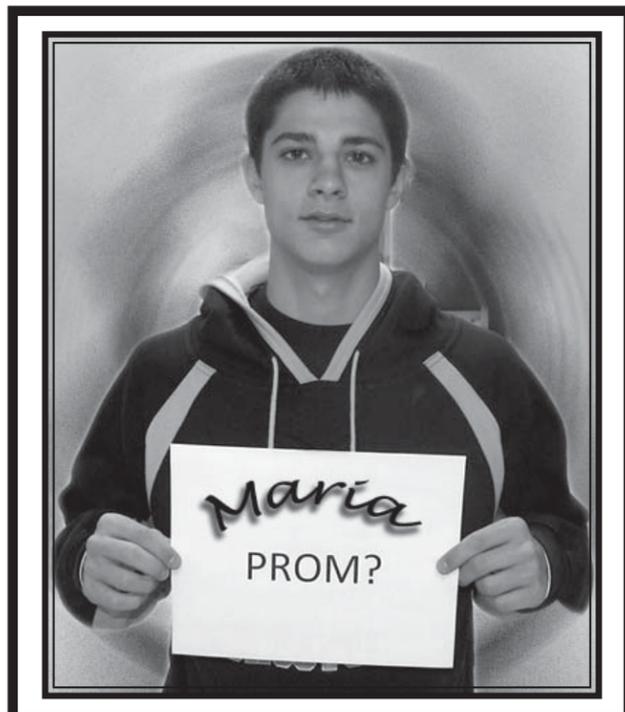
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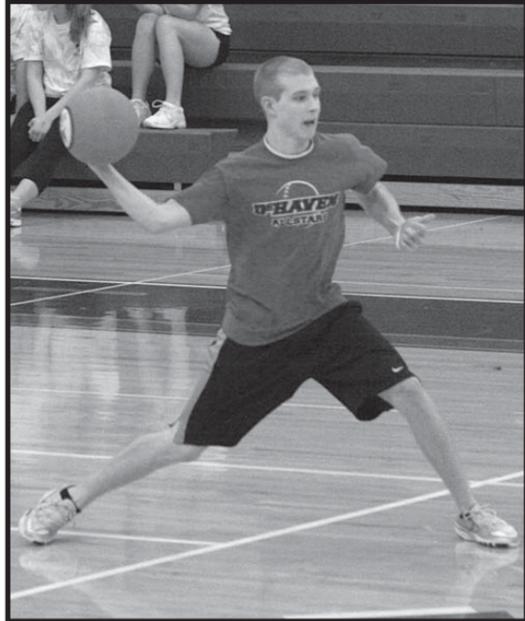
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Dodgeball tournament is an instant hit...literally

by Taylor Miksic

Speed, agility, power, and a killer outfit. What, you ask, do all of these combined create? The answer is one fantastic dodgeball team. The first annual dodgeball tournament was held last month on March 18 at the high school in gym A. Samantha Spagnoletti organized this successful event as her senior project, but got the idea from a teacher.

"I was complaining to Mr. Mitchell about not having any ideas for a senior project, and he told me how a previous school he worked at had done a dodgeball tournament. He said that he'd been trying to get someone to do it for years, and I thought it was perfect."



Team "Dunder" senior player Josh Hetz throws a fast ball (Pine Creek Journal)

With the help of Mr. Mitchell and the approval of Principal Mr. Timothy Royall, Spagnoletti got to work advertising the tournament, ordering dodgeballs, signing up teams, and getting a permit for the gym.

All of Spagnoletti's work paid off. The amount of spectators was well beyond what was expected and a total of 26 teams participated in the tournament with the winning team coming out to be team Dunder (Mike Powell, Stephen Kimpel, Conor Burke, J.T. Schwartz, and Josh Hetz).

Each team had to pay \$25 to participate as well as each member getting parental permission and a waiver signed.

Twenty five dollars per team, plus general admission for audience members, as well as concession stand and the 50/50 profits, raised about 1,200 dollars.

"It was my goal to raise at least a thousand dollars," Spagnoletti said, "but I thought even that was pushing it. To make that much and more, plus seeing everyone who came just to watch, was incredible."

All of the money raised went towards Challenger Camp, a camp for special needs children. It costs roughly \$66 per child to attend the camp, and with the money raised about 18 kids are able to go to the camp with no cost to them.

"My dad is the Shaler Soccer Club President, so he's the person in charge of the entire Challenger Camp [a special needs soccer camp]. Every year since he brought [the camp] to Shaler, I've helped out with it. After seeing how much it helps those children, I had to do something to keep it going," Spagnoletti said.

For such a small fee everyone had a great time raising money for children. Spagnoletti only hopes that this even turns into a school tradition that lasts many years.

"A junior is just going to have to take control of it. It's a great way to raise money, and it's fun, so it's worth it to keep it going," Spagnoletti said.



Junior Troy Scullo of team "The Disciples of Bill Murray" hammers the other players (Pine Creek Journal)



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SPORTS

Boys' tennis team looks to exceed expectations

With a impressive record of two section wins, the Titans are hungry for more

by Ben Mulig

As the spring season is here, the Titan tennis team is back in action. This year, it returns some old faces, and brings a lot of new faces into the lineup. After the team went winless in 2010, they have already surpassed that number and have a record of 2-5.

The Titans are made up of a strong senior group consisting of Steve Kimpel, J.T. Schwartz, Matt Nites, and Craig Feehan. Also giving a strong asset to the team are juniors Mike Titterington and Zack Taylor.



Stephen Kimpel returns a volley (JT Schwartz)

About half of the lineup this season consists of players that just finished their record breaking season on the basketball court. Kimpel, Schwartz, Feehan, Titterington, and Taylor all were a part of the 22-2, section title basketball team in the winter. They have decided to join forces again and take the tennis court. "It's a sport that doesn't interfere with basketball, and we use our athleticism from basketball to excel at the game of tennis," Schwartz explained.

Softball counts on playoff experience to carry them throughout the season

by Ben Mulig

The Lady Titans softball team is expecting another spectacular season after last year, when it played in the WPIAL championship game and a PIAA quarterfinal. With an experienced cast in the infield and a new and improved outfield, the Lady Titans set the sky as the limit.

The softball team is headed full throttle into the 2011 spring season with a returning group of playoff experienced players. The Titans are returning five starters from last year including



Lauren Hackett makes a play vs. Mt. Lebanon last year.

star catcher Lauren Hackett, pitcher Sydney Smyers, first baseman Jamie Roth, second baseman Jess Vanucci, and shortstop Maddie Mulig.

The team is also very excited about adding some new faces to the lineup with a brand new outfield, consisting of a group of twins. Candace and Shelby Tabrosky will share time in left field, and Kelly and Nicole Daley will take care of center and right field along with Sarah Geibel seeing some time in center as well. Finally, Niki Trimble will start the season at third base. The team also welcomes North Catholic transfer Morgan Russo into the lineup. She adds a big bat to the offense and will see some time at shortstop.

The girls have been one of the most successful teams in the WPIAL in the past 10 years. After winning a state championship in 2005, they have received WPIAL silver medals three consecutive times since 2007, and a PIAA silver in 2009.

"The team has a really good work ethic, and the team is experienced. They are focused, and they know what they want," Head coach Mr. Skip Palmer said.

With two games under its belt, Shaler is off to a perfect 4-0 start. They routed Plum 15-0 and knocked off defending WPIAL and PIAA champion, Mt. Lebanon, 2-1.

"We need better hitting. The girls played fall ball, and they hit well there, and we will have to see how the new 43-foot rule goes. The girls will have a little bit longer to look at the pitches, and the pitchers can throw more junk," Palmer said.

The boys started off the season strong with a victory over Central Valley at home. Although the opening win was shadowed by three straight losses to tough section opponents, North Hills, Seneca Valley, and defending state champions

Butler, the boys are still very confident that they can make this season a success.

"We need to win the matches we were supposed to win, and maybe even win some matches we aren't supposed to win, and this season will be a resounding success," Kimpel said.

Head coach Mr. Chuck Mura is also setting the bar high for the rest of the season.



Zack Taylor returns a volley as Mike Titterington looks on (JT Schwartz)

Mura is one of the most experienced coaches in the league and also coaches the girls' tennis team in the fall.

"We want to make the playoffs. That is our goal. We can be a very good team," Mura said.

Track and field team is looking toward success

by Stephen Kimpel

Even though the track teams, both boys and girls, have some returning veterans with the likes of Doug Thompson and Val McQuade respectively, both squads are facing numerous challenges going into the 2011 spring track and field season.

Often the struggle of track and field in the quad-A system is the actual battle of the numbers as the team contests with baseball, softball, girls and boys lacrosse, and boys tennis.

"There aren't many boys that came out this year, so in some events we aren't so strong, but in others there is much potential to do great," senior Sarah Cook stated.

However in this season it appears as if the struggle of attendance is not only a struggle against other spring sports, but also against injuries. Several track and field athletes from the previous seasons are unable to compete because of injury.

"We have a lot of girls who have been injured recently. That is probably our biggest struggle. Girls like Sarah Polito, Rebecca Wakely and Taylor Grosjean are injured and they are very valuable to the team," sprint specialist Taylor Miksic responded.

Even with the loss in talented athletes, the track team has improved some previously impressive talent in to top level competition through the winter track program.

"Audrey Schreiber has really done well so far and watching her place fourth at indoor states was great! I'm very happy for her great accomplishment... With so many new girls that have a ton of potential coming out to the team, I hope that they continue to work hard every day and find success in their events," Cook expressed.

One thing that is different from previous seasons is the level of team camaraderie that has been created already in this 2011 season.

"This track team is special because, even though everyone does different events, we are a team and it's nice to see that pretty much everyone is friends with everyone," Cook explained.

SPORTS

Home opener loss leads to win streak on the diamond

by J.T. Schwartz

As we roll into spring, the Shaler baseball team is looking forward to another successful year of baseball.

Although the team has lost some seniors that played a significant role on last year's team, the Titans are reloaded this year. Zach Schramm, the catcher, is a 3 year starter. Last year he batted over .300. Also a three year starter, second baseman Ben Mulig batted over an impressive .400 last year. Shortstop Ryan Mincher, also a returning starter, led the team in home runs last year.

The team lost their home opener to a tough Peters Township team, who is ranked number one in AAAA, by the score of 9-5. The Titans had the lead before giving up some big hits to the top ranked team.

"We definitely could have won the game. They were a great team, but we were just as good. Going toe to toe with the number one team in the WPIAL showed us that we are going to be contenders for a section or WPIAL title," Mulig said.

Coch Brian Junker looked at the game differently.

"Peters is a good team. We didn't play our best baseball. We didn't deserve to win the game. I think it was important for our kids to see that if we walk batters and make errors that you cannot win baseball games that way," he said.



Catcher Zack Schramm yells to his teammates (North Allegheny Website)

Getting past that game, the Titans came back and beat Central Catholic 3-2 and put a offensive show on against Mt. Lebanon, beating them 11-1.

With a record of 2-1, the Titans opened section play against rival North Allegheny. Klena started the game on the mound for the Titans and was a big key in the 3-2 victory over the Tigers. He struck out six while pitching a complete game.

"I think it gave the team some confidence, but it really didn't matter who we beat. It was just good to start of 1-0," Junker said. Following up their 1-0 start, the Titans remained undefeated in section play, posting a 17-8 victory against Fox Chapel.

The team is all around pretty solid, but there is something that may cause a setback or two.

"We basically have a brand new pitching staff. In our section, its tough to win without experienced pitching," Mulig said. "Throughout the season, I know that they will get more experience, and it helps that we have a really solid defense and a really good team chemistry to back them up."

Last year the team made it to the quarterfinal round of the playoffs, and with many key players returning, the Titans have set their expectations high. With the playoff experience coming back this year, the team is not setting the bar low.

"We set the same goals every year. They are to win the section, a WPIAL championship and to have a chance to compete for a state championship. I expect our kids to challenge these goals," Junker said.

New faces add energy to volleyball team

by Shelby Tabrosky

The boys varsity volleyball team is having a tough time recovering from the loss of three valuable seniors from last years team, but four players have stepped up to the net to take over.

"The challenge this team faces is the inexperience at the varsity level. We have people who have never played varsity volleyball and not caught up to the game," head coach Jim Nicola said.

Seniors Alex Kulwik, Clay Coutts, Devon Goyak, and junior Jeff Schmidt are four key players on the team. They help keep the team's head held high after, for example, the first loss of the season to North Allegheny.

"As a team we need to build chemistry and not put ourselves down," senior captain Kulwik said.

The team started off its season with a tournament at North Allegheny.

"We improved well as a team during the day. A few injuries may have hindered results in the win/loss columns, but every team starts somewhere," Kulwik said.

The team has a lot of new seniors who came out to try the sport for the first time, which made Nicola happy, but he said that it is hard to pick up the sport in a year. There are many underclassmen as well to help contribute to this year's team.

In addition, the players are looking forward to future games, because they know they will grow stronger the more they play.

"We are a team with not a lot of experience, but we are a talented team. If we all play our best each game, there's nothing we can't do," Kulwik said.

Before each game, Nicola talks to the team about goals to set. That way, the team can look to improve their goals and get a win.

"We just need to set some goals like the number of blocks, serves, etc.," Nicola said.

Schmidt is looking forward to all the new faces to proceed in success in the future. The team faces match-ups with not only North Allegheny, but also Seneca Valley, Fox Chapel, and Butler. They faced Fox Chapel already and lost with 1 win and 3 losses, and the Seneca Valley game ended quickly with to put the team's record at 0-4.

Overall, the team expects to improve in the late season with the help of many new players and more varsity level experience.

"I expect the team to catch up with the game at a varsity level, give them till the third week," Nicola said.

Boys lacrosse remains winless

by Vince Lamanna

Performing subpar for the beginning of the season, the boys lacrosse team is off to a slow start. The team remains winless in their first five games, scoring 20 goals.

"It's frustrating not being able to play like we want to. We know that we are better than this but we need to regroup and focus on winning," senior Zach Nellis said.

Last year's statistics didn't exactly predict a strong year this season. The Titans were 18th in the WPIAL, with a 7-8 record. They placed fourth in their division and were 5-3 in conference play. The Titans haven't won a game since they beat Taylor Allerdice in April of last year.

"Last season wasn't what we had hoped for. We are looking to go further into the playoffs



Senior Zach Nellis powers around an opposing defender (Yahoo.com)

"We need to work hard and concentrate on our game. We're going to take one game at a time and play as a team," senior Jon Monahan said.

Ladies lacrosse riding win streak

by Taylor Miksic

The girl's lacrosse team started off rough, but refuses to go down without a fight. Although they lost their first game against Seton La Salle, the girls bounced back to win their next two games.

The first game of the season was played at Seton La Salle. Unfortunately the first game of the season was the team's first loss, 9-2.

After three days to recover from the disheartening loss, the girls stepped it up against Blackhawk to bring home an outstanding victory, 18-5. The team's spirits were boosted once again.

"We beat Blackhawk 18-5 which was a nice victory for us," junior Elizabeth Casertano said. "We had the opportunity to switch around some players, and our low defenders went over for attack. It was definitely an eye opening experience for the whole team."

With their confidence high, the girls faced Hampton on April 4, winning 14-7. After this win the section record was 1-0, and the overall record was 2-1. The girls went on to beat Butler 13-10, making them 3-0 in their section.

The next few games to be played will hopefully end the same way as the recently played games: with a great win. Upcoming games include Hempfield, Knoch, and the previously postponed games against Erie McDowell and North Allegheny.

"We would like to defend our title as Section Champs again this year, and our goal is to ultimately win WPIALS for our division," Casertano said.

than last season, but it's going to be tough," Senior Dom Deltondo said. The Titans are currently 7th in their division, and 26th in the conference. With 12 goals for, and 54 goals against, the boys are quickly falling out of a playoff race.

Their next game is Tomorrow, against Taylor Allerdice at home. Entering Shaler 0-1, the Dragons are coming off a big 5-10 loss against Greensburg Central Catholic. Allerdice has won only one game this season and looks to capitalize on the recent play of the Titans.

The Back Page

Graduate enjoys life in the VH1 spotlight

by Anna Porter

Jim Shearer was once a student at Shaler Area High School. He walked the same hallways that countless numbers of students do every day. He attended the same classes, in the same classrooms as many of us do each week. So what's the difference between the average Shaler Area High School student and Jim Shearer? Just tune into VH1 and see for yourself. Since graduating from the school, Shearer has found his way into the music industry through hosting and video jockeying.



Jim Shearer shows off his Pittsburgh pride

Shearer grew up in the area, attending St. Bonaventure Catholic Grade School before moving to the high school. Unfortunately, throughout elementary and the majority of high school, Shearer had difficulty finding a group of friends who he could rely on.

"I didn't fit in well at St. Bonnies, and I fit in even worse at Shaler," he said. "Because I didn't fight back, I usually got picked on a lot, and oddly enough, some of the kids that got picked on would end up picking on me. Not until my senior year did I feel comfortable roaming the halls. I found a good group of friends and throughout the year, we tried to break down the class system present in high school culture."

With this new found self-confidence and group of friends, Shearer finally began enjoying his high school days. He did this by introducing one of the most vital sports ever to Shaler- hall-diving.

"Instead of just hanging out before first period began, we decided to throw parties at our locker. Each one got bigger and better, which included a sport we invented called hall-diving- where a person sprints,

jumps at the starting line, and dives as far as they can on their stomach," he said.

However, the fun and games didn't last for long. "Eventually, I got an in-school suspension, but because our principal knew we weren't trying to start any trouble, he said if we held off on Locker Parties for the rest of the year, we could do anything we wanted on the last day of school. We kept our word, he kept his, and on the final day of school we had the best Locker Party ever! The only bad thing is that I lost in the Hall Diving Championship to fellow senior Brian "Air Crescini."

A remarkable feat, some may not believe that at one point in time, Shaler was actually a school that allowed fun to occur. All one has to do is search "Locker Party IV" on YouTube and the clip, which took place in the Main Lobby, right outside the Auditorium is enough proof.

After graduating in 1993, Shearer attended Waynesburg College, where he received his undergraduate

degree in English, then moved on to gain his master's degree in TV Radio and Film at Syracuse University.

"After watching the Beastie Boys' "So What'ca Want?" music video on MTV, I knew I wanted to work in the music industry," Shearer said. "I wanted to be a VJ, just because I thought that'd be the easiest way to actually meet the Beastie Boys."

The chances of actually being successful as a video jockey are slim. Shearer thought all the time that his dreams of being on TV were unrealistic.

His break came in 2001, when he was hired as a VJ for MTV2. Shearer spent a little over six years working for MTV, before accepting his current job as host for VH1's *Top 20 Video Countdown*.

Shearer has interviewed many celebrities, including his favorite artist The Beastie Boys. He would also one day like to interview Paul McCartney or Madonna.

Along with his passion for music, Shearer also has a great love for Pittsburgh sports. When he's not hosting, Shearer creates YouTube videos devoted to the Steel City's sports teams.

"In 2008 I was in between jobs and actually got turned down as a host for a web-show the NHL was creating. I decided to start my own--Yinz Luv 'Da Guins!," he said. "I got such an enthusiastic response during the 2008 Penguins' playoff run, I decided to do a show for the Steelers as well--Yinz Luv 'Da Stillers! I've been doing both ever since. Winning also helps. You'd be surprised by how many people don't watch my web-shows when the Pens or Steelers lose. The ratings for a Buccos web-show could be pretty bad, unless they start winning consistently."

DELANO, Calif. — A Central California man who was at a cockfight died after being stabbed in the leg by a bird that had a knife attached to its own limb, officials confirmed Monday.

An autopsy concluded Ochoa died of an accidental "sharp force injury" to his right calf.

WEIRD News

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A convicted killer who escaped from an Arizona prison said

after his capture that he had planned to overdose on heroin at Yellowstone National Park and let bears eat him to end the fear and panic he

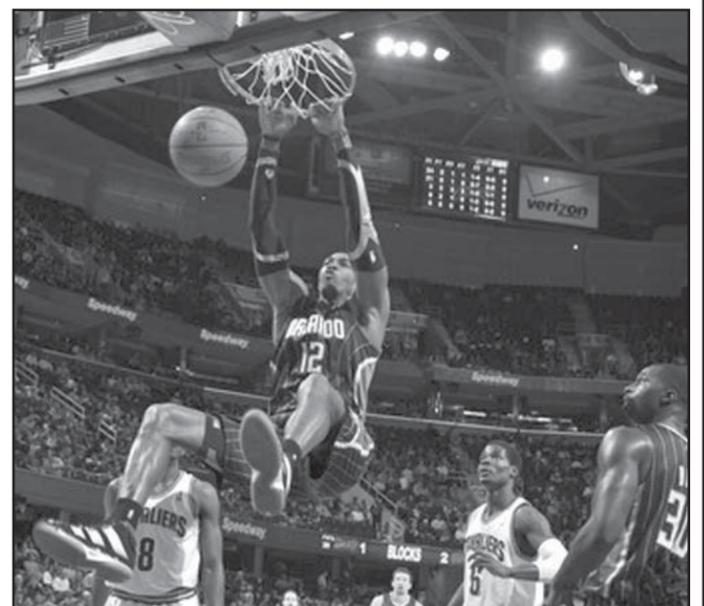
was experiencing while on the run.

Tracy Province told Mohave

County sheriff's Detective Larry Matthews that he had wanted to go up on a mountain, shoot up a gram of heroin and "be bear food." As he was preparing the drug, a voice told

him not to go through with the plan, and he changed course in favor of trying to hitchhike to Indiana to see family.

A sweat-soaked souvenir



On March 21, Dwight Howard (above) and the Orlando Magic played in Cleveland. Business teacher Mr. Ron McAdams and his son were at the game. After the game, Howard tossed his jersey into the stands and McAdams caught it. "My son was so excited. It was awesome...even though the jersey was soaked in sweat," he said.

SCG SHALER CULTURE GRID		Who is your favorite person in history?	What is your favorite holiday meal?	Why does the Easter bunny carry eggs?	If you got a tattoo what would it be?
	Senior Brian Stein	Franklin Delano Roosevelt	Thanksgiving dinner 	Just for show 	Something meaningful
	Sophomore Lexie Schwartz	Peter Cotton Tail 	Buffalo chicken fingers and fries	Why wouldn't he?	My brother's name in a heart
	Senior Shannon Powell	Amie Dobracki	Thanksgiving hands down	So he can make an omelet	A Dove
	Senior Conor Burke	Biggie Smalls 	Taco Bell on Cinco Di Mayo	Because chickens don't have hands	Tribal like Dil-lion Bubiths