

The Oracle

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Seniors place 3rd in STEAM event

by Gabrielle Girton

On Friday March 3, Shaler Area hosted a STEAM competition, in which 11 high schools from around the state participated.

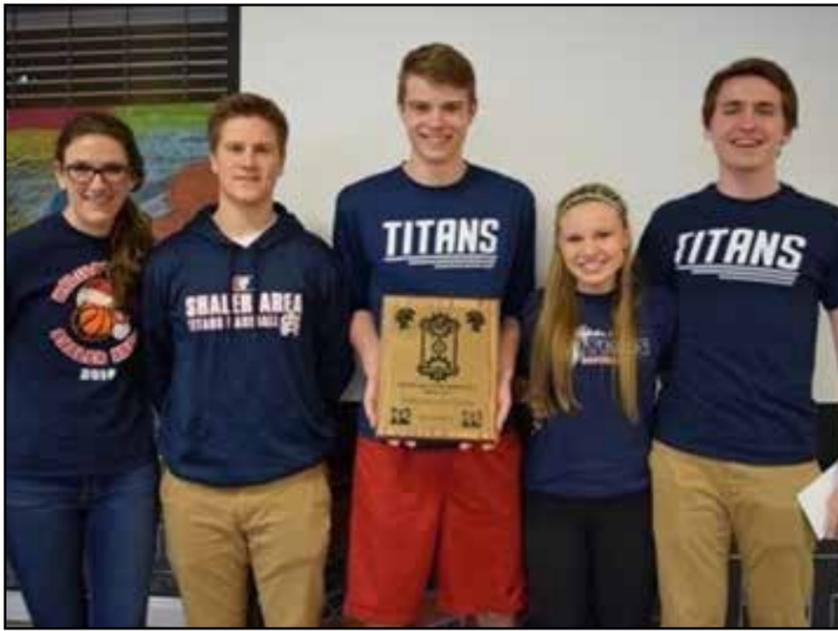
The schools that competed were Bethlehem-Center High School, Brentwood High School, Fox Chapel Area High School, Mars Area High School, Moon Area High School, North Allegheny Intermediate High School, North Allegheny Senior High School, Propel Braddock, Riverview High School, Shaler Area High School and Trinity High School.

The competition was created by several teachers and even some students throughout the past few months. The students had to take part in a challenge in each of the STEAM fields: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics.

In science, the students had no idea what to expect. Shaler Area chemistry teacher Bryan Seybert created a challenge where students would have to use processing skills and chemistry skills to determine the formula of a solution in as few steps possible. Some schools succeeded in this and were able to determine the process in as little as three minutes, and other schools ended up needing the entire 20 minute block.

Technology was the field that stumped most people, as they were required to use coding to program lights to react to different stimuli. Some schools were successful, but most schools struggled and were not able to complete the challenge.

For the engineering field, the students knew what they needed to



From left, seniors Allie Graf, Corey Nasiadaka, Michael Bagwell, Taylor Jones and Michael Dunn

do months ahead of time. They had to work as a team to create a vehicle that would be able to maneuver around an obstacle course while the driver was blindfolded. The driver listened to verbal commands in order to navigate the cart within the school gym's tape-marked confines. At one point, a plastic deer was placed in the course, and the students had to find a way around it. Students also needed to maneuver turns, stop at specified times and drive in reverse. This aspect of the competition allowed the students to have creative freedom over designs, which included Lighting McQueen, and Wall-E.

For Art, students had to complete a piece in the style of Pennsylvania native Keith Haring. Students were graded on their ability to use wooden dolls in order to draw realistic figures with thermodynamic heat signatures over a labyrinth.

Finally, for the math portion of

the competition the students had to use math and physics in order to suspend a 1 kg mass in a pool of water. The students also had the opportunity to earn extra point by completing several difficult math problems during the other competition.

The competition was originally introduced by Physics teacher Mr. Greg Mason, who had participated in similar competitions when he was in high school.

"STEAM programs really help develop processing and logic skills in students, so I'm excited to see more interest in some of the STEAM programs at Shaler Area, it's cool to showcase those parts of our school," Mason said.

Several students from National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta volunteered as judges and tour guides from the schools throughout

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Titan athletics highlighted in new mural

by Davis Deasy

Since last Fall, Shaler Area's athletic office has some new decor. Most noticeably, the addition of a mural which features many Shaler Area athletes.

The mural displays athletes participating in every one of Shaler Area's varsity sports, with students from the class of 2015 and forward. Overall, there are 35 photos that make up the mural. Most of the photos are from either Lisa Montini or the yearbook staff.

Athletic Director Clint Rauscher got the idea for the mural after visiting another school and hopes it will benefit the athletics department in the long run.

"I am hoping it will bring pride about our athletic program, and create some intrinsic value to those participating in Titan athletics," Rauscher said.

He also hopes that the mural will encourage more students to try out for these sports teams. Students already featured on the mural also feel that the mural is beneficial to all sports in Shaler Area.

"It's awesome for our school to be able to make something as cool as the mural, and to be featured on it is just awesome," senior basketball player Tanner Rein-

heimer said. "I think the mural will affect Shaler's athletics because kids will look at that and it will make them want to join one of those teams on the wall."

There are over 100 Shaler students on the wall, including team pictures and one crowd picture.

"It's pretty neat knowing that everyone that walks by can see it, and there are a lot of Shaler athletes up there," junior golfer Tanner Grzegorzczuk said.

The room in which the mural is featured has recently been given the title the "Titan Pride Room".

"It also provides class room to have for any press worthy moments for our sports programs, such as students signing letters of intent to play in college," Rauscher said.

The goal is to place updated pictures on the mural sometime in the future.

"The plan will be to probably update the wall hopefully every 5-7 years or so, to keep it relevant. It is a process, but we used a new removable glue so that we could remove it from the wall when the time came instead of tearing up the wall to remove. It is too costly to try to redo the wall yearly or every other year," Rauscher said.

Career visits give students view from "real world" jobs

by Addeline Devlin

This month, the Shaler Area counseling department began offering career day visits to all students in the high school. The visits will be held during school hours and will work the same way as the college visits offered at the beginning of the year.

The counseling department works very hard to help students prepare for life after high school and the real world. The counselors wanted to let students have an opportunity to hear advice from professionals in specific fields.

"As apart of our program, there's a lot of focus on career education and guiding students early on all throughout high school by exploring careers. (The career visit) was an idea of something additional that we haven't been doing at the high school level," high school counselor Mrs. Danielle Grimaldo said.

Volunteers from a variety of careers will come explain their day to day tasks and answer any questions about their field of work. The counselors tried to schedule a variety of careers that would interest a wide range of students. Some of the visits offered include individuals coming from the restaurant industry, hotel management, medical fields, banking, engineering criminology and marketing.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in the medical field or any type of health profession, there are many great visits available. Mercy Behavioral health, Fightin Fit physical therapy and Duquesne school of pharmacy all plan to visit.

"I've always been interested in a career in the medical field but going to the Mercy visit opened up a lot of options for me. I was curious about careers in counseling and therapy and after the presentation i thought it might actually be a good path to take," said senior Gina Riccelli.

A calendar with all scheduled visits and dates is posted outside the guidance office and will also be announced on the morning announcements. Each visit is about one period long. In order to attend the visits the student must pick up a pass in the guidance office and have his/her teacher sign it then report back to the office the period of the visit.

"It's one thing to have teachers, counselors and parents guide students on their career paths, it's a whole other level to hear from somebody already in the industry. They can tell you what the job looks like day in and day out, not only that but they can also give you other career options or titles in their area that maybe you have not considered," Grimaldo said.

OPINIONS

School should encourage learning outside the classroom

by Shannon O'Leary

After recently writing an editorial about the “participhobia” epidemic, the fear of participating within the school, in the last edition, I have taken my ideas into further consideration. I realized that in order to avoid being a total hypocrite, I think it is necessary to formulate some kind of cure rather than just sitting back and complaining.

With that being said, what if the problem is not simply the students, but is the system as a whole?

As students we spend thirteen years of our lives within school walls for nine months at a time, surrounded by the same faces and same white walls and white floors, regardless of the different buildings.

Throughout those years, we are taught basic math, how to read, different languages and the history, not only of our nation, but of others as well. We learn how to communicate, we discover personal interests and we problem solve, critically think and shape our own opinions.

We learn more and tend to appreciate learning much more as time goes on. However, as those years go by, the tremendous emphasis on grades slowly but surely increases.

I am by no means belittling the education system, because I am not ignorant enough to even pretend that education is not drastically important, hand-in-hand with our intellectual development, but I believe there is a difference between genuinely learning a subject and memorizing facts to pass a test only to forget those facts the very next day.

Yes, there has to be a means of evaluation in order to see how well a student understands the mate-

rial and yes, there needs to be a way to differentiate the stronger students from the weaker, especially in preparation for the work force or post-secondary education. But, no, students should not have to spend so much time stressing and worrying about getting that A vs truly learning what they are being taught.

GPA should not be the focus. Class rank should not be the focus. Report cards should not be the factor that determines our intelligence and work ethic.

What is the purpose of a thirteen-year long process if students are not getting the most out of it? Why should the things listed above be the points of students' focus and where is the emphasis on strong character versus strong scores on a math test? Isn't school supposed to prepare us for the “real world”?

Breaking news, the real world does not revolve around a grading system; the real world consists of forming relationships with people, communicating, and using what you *actually* learned in all those years of schooling to problem solve, find a job, and build a future.

So now let's talk about the proposed solution.

Call me crazy, but I like to imagine a world in which it is okay to miss school here and there to go on educational trips to see and experience things that aren't able to be learned in a building where we cannot even see outside, let alone experience what is happening out there.

I do not mean random vacations, but rather go out of state to different museums or monuments, or even out of the country to *experience* the cultures in which we discuss. Application and visualization could go a long way.

Imagine schools being able to offer volunteer

programs, where once a week you could spend time volunteering at a homeless shelter, or a hospital, or a daycare. What if you could put your homework away for a night and work with a group of students to develop a fundraiser for a charity? What if participating and getting active was promoted and experience itself was a grade?

And if that is too unrealistic to imagine, let's narrow the solution down to simply putting more of a focus on learning through experience. Students should be able to job shadow and go on more field trips, without worrying about the class work they will have to make up later. It should be common reality for any given student rather than a privileged activity for students who choose to get involved.

Here and there, we come across teachers who take time every once in a while, or even every day, to talk about current events or life lessons, which can be very significant especially to struggling teenagers. Now think about how valuable this information will be at one point in the near future.

Basically, learning through experience and developing as human beings is just as important as becoming scholars of the many subjects we are expected to learn. What we need to take into account when diagnosing “participhobia” is the idea that students, because of expectations, are far too focused on getting that 4.0 rather than getting that grade A personality.

Having better means of reaching that goal could ultimately dissipate the “disease” among the student body and truly bring us together as people as we experience new things and meet different people, together.

A Secretary of Education should have education experience

By Addie Devlin

Donald Trump's recent appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education has people all over the country concerned for the future of the public schooling system. DeVos, a Christian, conservative billionaire should not be the one in charge of our country's education system.

Trump's education proposal calls for dedicating \$20 billion to promote education reforms. These reforms could possibly “help” families move away from “failing government (public) schools” and transition to private, religious and charter schools.

“We know that millions of children, mostly low-income and minority children, remain trapped in K-12 schools that are not meeting their needs,” DeVos stated when Trump first released the school choice education plan.

I have attended public schooling for all twelve years of my own education and have never felt “trapped” or wished to attend a private school instead. When it comes to “meeting needs”, I believe public schools do a great job, considering classes are taught by certified teachers and must follow curriculum standards. Private schools do not require teaching certifications and design their own curriculum.

The average cost for a private high school for one individual student is \$13,538. DeVos believes the government should provide parents who cannot afford the “proper” education with school vouchers.

School vouchers are distributed/created by state governments. They al-

low parents to use public funds to help pay for their child's private school tuition.

DeVos, as well as her children, never attended a public school. She also has no experience working in education, unlike the former secretary of education, John King Jr., who worked as a public school administrator and teacher. DeVos has zero firsthand knowledge on the public education system. She also seems to be uneducated on some of the basic education laws including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

DeVos believes education is a choice that should be left to the states, not the federal government. However, IDEA is a federal law that ensures children with disabilities free and public education.

During DeVos's confirmation hearing, Senator Tim Kaine asked her if she believes that all schools that receive federal funding (public, public charter or private) should be required to meet the requirements of IDEA. “I think that is a matter that is best left to the states,” DeVos replied.

“So some states might be good to kids with disabilities and other states might not be so good and, what then, people can just move around the country if they don't like how kids are being treated?” Kaine replied.

DeVos claims her main goal is to give every child an opportunity for good education, but her ideas and goals for the future do not include EVERY child.

Members of the LGBTQ community might also feel intimidated by

DeVos. Although she has declined to voice her stance on the situation, past actions from DeVos and her family show reason for concern.

“The DeVos family has a long, well-documented history of funding organizations dedicated to undermining and restricting the rights of LG-BTQ people,” said Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign in a Politico article.

I'm actually glad I had the opportunity to attend a public school and experience the diversity. Rather than wearing uniforms, I was allowed to wear what I chose. I was able to learn with people that were different from me. Unlike private schools, public schools consists of students from all different backgrounds, culturally, religiously and financially. I think this helps and prepares students when it comes to going out into the real world.

Many politicians have voted against DeVos' nomination, including

Pennsylvania senator Bob Casey. DeVos still won the votes, but the nomination was a fight. For the first time in senate history, Vice President Pence voted to break the 50-50 tie in a confirmation vote.

“I opposed Betsy DeVos because I believe our children need a champion of public schools as the Secretary of Education, not someone whose career has been spent trying to privatize public schools,” Casey stated in his open letter to constituents, thanking them for voicing their opinions.

All children living in the United States should have a right to public education, therefore I believe DeVos does not deserve her position. She has a big responsibility on her hands, and with no prior experience and lack of knowledge, I don't think she is prepared. We should all be concerned that our country's education system is headed by a Christian billionaire with a goal of privatizing education.

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.

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Author shares stories about writing Flight 93 book

by Maura Fisher and Tim Templin

Tom McMillan, former writer for the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and current Vice President of Communications for the Pittsburgh Penguins, gives people a new perspective on the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001, specifically Flight 93. In January of 2014, he published a book called, "Flight 93: The Story, the Aftermath, and the Legacy of American Courage on 9/11".

McMillan began his writing career as a sports writer for the Pittsburgh Post Gazette in 1982. After a successful career as a sports writer, he became the VP of the Penguins in 1996 and is currently still working for the team. Though being a passionate sports enthusiast, McMillan admits he needs an escape from sports after being in the industry 35 years. McMillan uses history as a personal escape.

"I'm a history buff, it's my passion. I always tell people that sports are their escape from the rest of their lives. When you work in sports, you need an escape from sports. You can't do sports 24/7, so history has become my escape," McMillan said.

Even though he's a writer, McMillan never thought that he would publish a book. A month after the 10th anniversary of 9/11, the opportunity was handed to him through his job with the Penguins. He received a letter from the families of Flight 93 asking if they could honor the coroner of Somerset County at a game. McMillan agreed, and the coroner and the families came in to be recognized at a Penguin game.

The families invited McMillan to visit the new memorial that opened for the anniversary. One Saturday morning, he drove out to the memorial and was taken to the actual crash site where only family members are permitted to go. McMillan didn't know what to expect. He described his personal account of the crash as stunning and unimaginable.

"I said to them 'As somebody who studies history, there is a lot of information here. You need to find someone to write a book on Flight 93,'" McMillan said.

The man leading the tour was aware that McMillan was a sports writer, and asked if he would be willing to write the book. McMillan never thought of writing a book until that moment, and from that moment he thought that if he didn't write it, no one else was going to.

"Sometimes opportunities come to you that you don't expect. This book was one of them," he said.

McMillan was aware that researching was going to be challenging because there are people alive today that are personally connected to Flight 93. It is still a sensitive topic. When interviewing families who lost loved ones on September 11th, he knew that he could not push them too far for information. He took what he could get, and he didn't ask for anything more.

In his research, McMillan found that many ideas he had previously believed about the crash were incorrect. There are a lot of misconceptions about what actually happened.

"Early reporting on tragedies is almost always wrong because the public is so desperate for any piece of information they can find. In this day of age, anybody who has camera can be a journalist. Whoever puts the information out the fastest gets recognized for it, and people often believe everything they see online about these kinds of things. News reports of the crash throw out bits of information that weren't true just to stay ahead of other broadcasters," McMillan said.

A common myth of the Flight 93 story is that the passengers who tried to fight back purposefully crashed the plane over the open field in Somerset County. McMillan explained in his book that this wasn't true.

"The plane was going 563 mph. You can be over an open field now, and a city the next second. (The passengers) had no idea what they were flying over. They were just attacking because they had the motivation. Besides the few phone calls to the ground they had no contact with anyone. Everybody in America knew what was going on except the people on that plane," McMillan explained.

Another myth that McMillan addresses is the box cutter myth. The FBI announced that it had found box cutters at the crash site, and they believed that the hijackers took over the plane with them. A year later, this theory was debunked.

"They have receipts of 9 knives that the hijackers purchased in Florida. The box cutter theory doesn't really add up because the box cutters could've been in somebody's luggage," McMillan said.

The box cutter theory caught on because that information was given to the public when the tragedy was still a fresh topic. The knives weren't discovered until a year after the crash, and by then people weren't paying attention anymore.

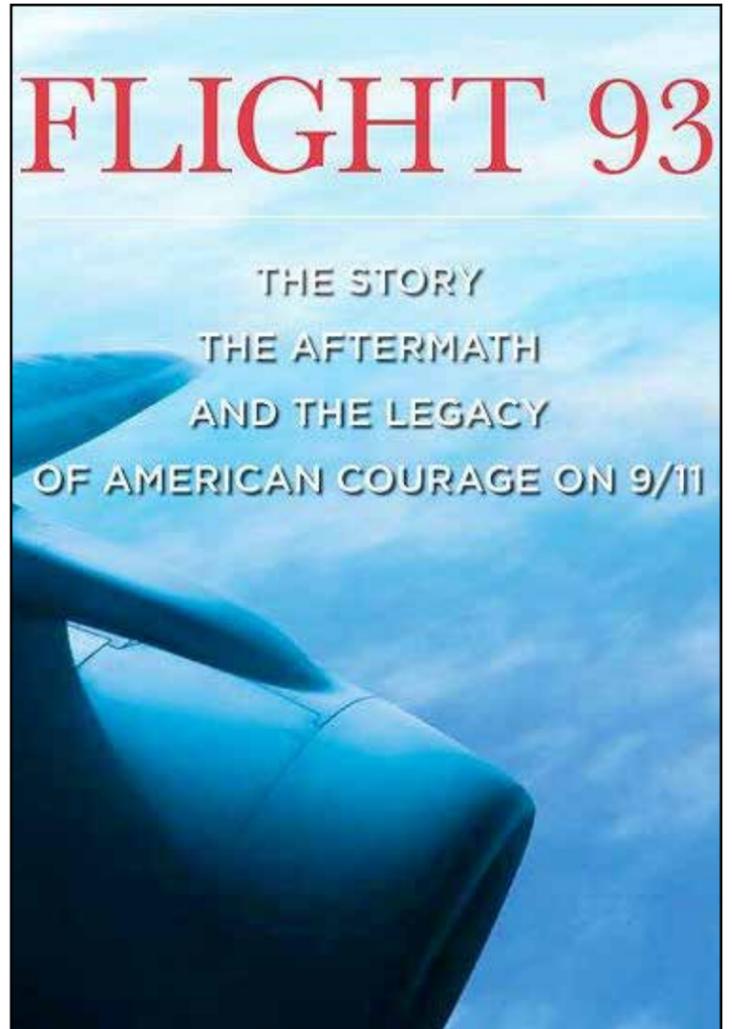
Perhaps the biggest misconception of the crash is the story of Todd Beamer. Beamer was a passenger on Flight 93 who fought back. Though he wasn't the only one, his name is most recognizable because of his famous line, "Let's roll." Thomas Burnett Jr, Jeremy Glick, and Todd Beamer were three heroes of Flight 93.

The three men all made calls from the plane. Burnett and Glick both called their wives. Beamer also called his wife, but the call either didn't connect or Beamer hung up the phone before his wife could answer. Beamer then was connected to Verizon phone operator Lisa Jefferson. Jefferson heard the conversations between Beamer, Burnett, and Glick, and therefore Beamer's famous line.

Jefferson's interview was one of the first on Flight 93. Before her interview, nobody knew what happened, and why the plane crashed in the middle of an open field. Jefferson told Beamer's story because that's who she talked to. Because the public heard this story first, it became the most known. Beamer was a hero, but so were Burnett and Glick. Beamer wasn't the leader of the attack, but he's the most famous name from Flight 93.

In his research, McMillan found that the entirety of the hijacking was very calculated. However, several things went wrong on Flight 93. The attack was planned on a Tuesday because the hijackers researched that there was light travel. On Tuesday, September 11th, 2001, there was a Joint Session of Congress at the Capitol building. The US Capitol Building was assumed to have been the target for Flight 93.

"One thing you realize in the research is how meticulous the attack was. They chose 4 flights that took off within 25 minutes of each other but Flight 93 was more than 40 minutes late taking off. If it was on



time, I have no doubt the plane would have hit the Capitol. Also, the hijackers took 46 minutes to take over 93, but the other flights only took 30," McMillan explained.

In that 40 minute delay, the passengers had enough time to figure out what was happening because they had the ability to contact their families on the ground. This is where Beamer, Burnett, and Glick took their opportunity to fight back. One of those passengers was a licensed pilot for small planes. They thought that if they could get him into the cockpit, they could maybe land the plane.

"On the cockpit recorder at 10 am, we can hear somebody yell from outside, 'In the cockpit, if we don't we'll die'. They were trying to get their pilot into the cockpit. At 10:07 am, the plane hit the ground," McMillan said.

After a year of research, McMillan decided to start writing his book. It took a total of two and a half years to finish the book.

"You reach a certain point where you just have to start writing the book. I could've researched for 20 more years, but the story would've been the same. I got an agent and then the book was published in 2014," McMillan said.

The Flight 93 memorial opened after the 10th anniversary. There's a memorial and visitor center and a path that leads part of the way to crash site. All of those who were lost are remembered at the Flight 93 memorial in Shanksville, PA.

McMillan volunteers at the memorial in the summer. He gets involved as a tour guide telling the story of Flight 93 to the visitors who come there.

"People come out here and they don't know what they are seeing. People ask questions and we give talks now. Because it is such a solemn place, we used to be more reactive as guides. Now, we're more proactive. We want people to ask questions so they can understand the story," McMillan explained.

McMillan was hesitant to write this story.

"Part of me wonders who am I to write about this national tragedy?" McMillan said.

He figured that the first responders who actually witnessed the crash weren't going to write a book 10 years after the crash, so he figured nobody was and decided to take on the project.

McMillan is working on another book about the Civil War. He thinks that the writing process for this book is easier because he now knows what he's doing. The book is set to come out this June.

"I said to them 'As somebody who studies history, there is a lot of information here. You need to find someone to write a book on Flight 93'...Sometimes opportunities come to you that you don't expect. This book was one of them."

-- Tom McMillan

First grader at Rogers finishes six years of chemotherapy

by Tom Castello and Bridget Nickel

Jimmy Spagnolo, a first grader at Rogers Primary, just completed his final chemotherapy treatment after six years of receiving treatment. Jimmy was born with an inoperable brain tumor. Throughout Jimmy's six-year journey of fighting his tumor, his family has been part of a very emotional story.

For his parents, Jim and Lacie Spagnolo, learning their son had these medical issues was a scary experience for both of them.

"It was very scary when it happened. Imagine having your worst nightmare and never waking up from it. I think you go through different stages of dealing with it. You are shocked, depressed, you go through the 'why me?' stages. It took a little longer to deal with it," his parents said.

As the Spagnolo family sat in the doctor's office waiting for results, there was no good news coming from the doctor.

"When we first got the news, I thought I needed to figure something out. I went into the shower at the hospital and was in there for a very long time. I was trying to figure out how I wanted to deal with it. I went through every aspect in my head, I went down every avenue and it was pretty dark," Mrs. Spagnolo said. "Then I started thinking 'What if I don't believe the doctors? What if I just say Jimmy is going to be healthy and he is going to outdo it all?' That's the outcome I wanted."

A variety of chemotherapy treatments seemed to be the only option the family had to help their son.

"They wanted to put 3 or 4 different types of chemotherapy in him, just to throw everything at him, but Jim and I didn't want to kill him with the toxins," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

In most cases, when the same type of chemotherapy is used, it becomes less effective and could possibly not work at all. In Jimmy's case, the same treatment was used throughout his six years of treatment and proved to be successful in the end.

"Jimmy was a rare case. He had the same chemo work for him all 4 times, usually a chemo only works for the first year, maybe a second time," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

The hospital wanted to put a port into Jimmy's chest to administer all of the different chemotherapy treatments at once. Jimmy's parents asked if the hospital could somehow deviate from protocol and try one chemo treatment on Jimmy via IV.

At first, the doctor was hesitant and did not want to go against the normal protocol of the hospital.

"The doctor walked back in the room a minute later, it was really weird. She came in and said, 'You know what? We are going to throw out protocol,'" Mrs. Spagnolo said.

That night, at just four months old, Jimmy Spagnolo had his first chemotherapy treatment.

The day after Jimmy's first treatment, the family was sent home by the doctor. They were due back the next month for his next treatment. At this point, they were just sitting and waiting to see if the initial treatment helped. Although the parents were stressed, Jimmy's attitude, even as a baby, was positive.

"Jimmy was such a happy baby during these times. He didn't get sick at all," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

At six years old, Jimmy received his final treatment which lifted a weight not only off of his shoulders, but off of the family's as well.

"The best way to describe the moment when he finished was like inhaling a breath of relief," Mrs. Spagnolo said. "It's hard to watch him go through all of this so when he can take a break and go off of all meds, it brings us the greatest joy to watch him be a boy with no worries."

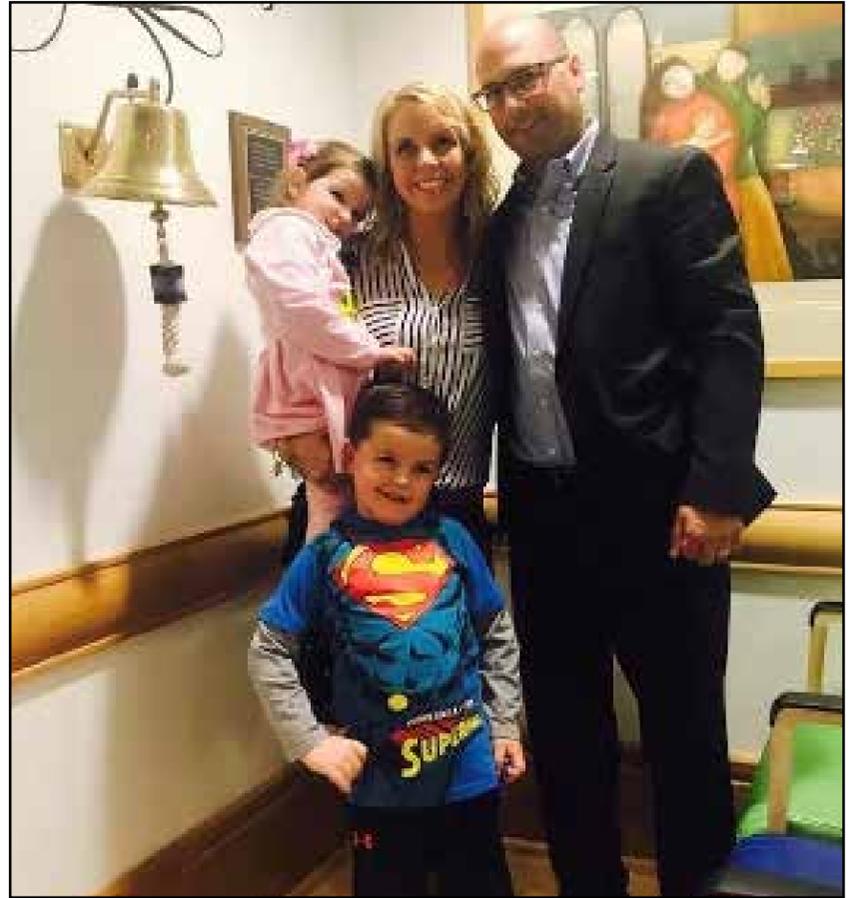
Jimmy's mother decided that she would share Jimmy's story and make it known. She created a Facebook page titled "I'm praying for Jimmy Spagnolo" where updates of Jimmy's journey are posted consistently. She also uses the page to provide inspiration and understanding to people who were going through something similar with their children as well.

With over 7,000 likes on the page and nearly 7,000 people following the page, the family has received comments and messages from people everywhere saying this page provides them with a sense of hope and how much Jimmy inspires them every day.

Through all of these stages, this never tore the family apart and they never let it affect the love and support that was brought in with the family.

"You always look at each other and all of your blessings. Lacie and I both have families that are very helpful. We got a lot of support, and we made a conscious decision, looked each other in the eye and said, 'This isn't going to break us, Jimmy deserves the best parenting that we can give and we were never going to go backwards, just keep moving forward and be positive through it all,'" Mr. Spagnolo said.

During the times of treatments and sickness, not only was the family always keeping their heads held high, but Jimmy who was going through it all was always happy and never got down.



Jimmy with his family at Children's Hospital after ringing the bell. (Facebook)

"We always focused on all of the good stuff and all of the cool things he got to do at Children's Hospital," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

Knowing how difficult it would be to keep an active three-year-old still enough to receive treatment, the family did whatever was in their best interest to make the stay as comfortable as possible.

"If we had to take Jimmy and he wanted to run around the hospital floor while hooked up to an IV bag, it was hard. Instead we put him in a red push car they had on the hospital floor, and took turns pushing him around while carrying the IV cart around for the 4 or 5 hours it took to complete the treatment," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

"We made being at the hospital a reality for what it was for him. We understood the gravity of what we had to go through but we created an alternate reality of positivity and fun to help all of us get through it better," Mr. Spagnolo said.

Jimmy's moments of triumph are all recorded by his parents and family. This has always helped him for when he goes back to the hospital he can realize that he is going not to just be treated, but to be cheered on by everyone and go do the fun stuff that he always gets to do.

Even after being put under by anesthesia, which is supposed to make you feel dizzy for up to 24 hours, Jimmy was up an hour later dancing and wanting to have fun. He created his own state of mind with everything and never doubted being

able to handle whatever the next phase was. At the end of Jimmy's treatments he got to ring the bell at Children's Hospital to signify he was finished with his chemotherapy. For Jimmy this was a great experience and he was so happy when it was over.

"I felt great, happy and excited all at once. Also I felt loved by everyone who was cheering me on," Jimmy said.

When Jimmy went back to school at Rogers he was greeted by all of his classmates and teachers when he walked into school.

"When I got to school everyone was yelling my name, and when I went into my classroom everyone gave me a hug all at once. My teacher said 'don't knock him over' and then we had a dance party, too," Jimmy said.

Since Jimmy was a baby, his family would always have dance parties and this is still one of Jimmy's favorite things to do.

"We lived our lives for 3 months at a time, and at the end of those three months we would have a life changing decision to make. In between we would try to live it up as much as we can. Even leaving the hospital we would do elevator dances and have dance parties when we got home," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

Even now the family will still go 3 months at a time for at least the next few years. Every three months, Jimmy will have to go for scans on his tumor. If they are clear for at least 2 years then it is unlikely that the tumor will ever grow again. The family feels a great sense of relief that Jimmy will no longer be treated with chemo, but only checked on.

"It's a beautiful thing to watch how Jimmy celebrates each moment. When we watched him ring that bell we felt relief, we've made it through another year with joy, laughter, and the ability to overcome. It's a big weight lifted off of us as parents to not have to worry about the chemo each month, but more importantly it's knowing Jimmy will be free to grow and live his life without the side effects of a drug weighing on him," Mrs. Spagnolo said.

"It's hard to watch him go through all of this, so when he can take a break and go off of all meds, it brings us the greatest joy to watch him be a boy with no worries."

--Mrs. Spagnolo

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Titans set multiple school records in the pool

by Shannon O'Leary

This year at Shaler Area, the swimming and diving season has proved to be successful, especially considering not only one, but two school records have been broken. Senior Emily Schaefer set four different records and senior Evan Kelly set the diving record, achieving the highest amounts of points for an individual diver in one season.

Although the two have different experiences, both have proved that a strong work ethic and dedication go a long way.

Schaefer started her career twelve years ago when she joined the Pine Richland Aquatics Club team after constantly being dragged to her brother's swim meets. Since she was younger and had to be there anyway, she decided she would just join to get the most out of it.

After growing comfortable with her teammates and the program at Pine Richland, she decided to continue to swim there throughout her career, including three out of four years of high school competition.

As a senior, she finally decided to swim for the Shaler Area Varsity team for the first time, and she proved to be a great addition to the team.

"I have wanted to swim for the school since freshman year but the schedule always conflicted with my club team so I never did. I figured this was my last chance, so I would do it," Schaefer said.

After progressing through the season, she did not regret taking advantage of the opportunity; she made new friends and created a strong bond with her teammates.

"Swimming with the school is like having a new family. I have gone to school with these people my whole life and I used to feel like I barely knew them but now they are my best friends. It has definitely been a lot of fun; the team is really supportive and everyone is just awesome," she said.

Originally a breast stroker, she eventually found herself to be most competitive in the butterfly and 200-meter Individual Medley (2IM), also competing in the 400-meter freestyle and 200-meter medley relays.

Ironically, it was her meet against Pine Richland in which she first set the Shaler 2IM record.

"When I saw the score and realized I had beaten the record, I was at first relieved because my coaches



Senior Emily Schaefer helped set four school records this year (Matt Lienemann)

were on me about it all season, pushing me to try and beat it. After that initial reaction, I was just really excited," Schaefer said.

Going into WPIALs, Schaefer had high expectations for herself, and sure enough her performance was impressive. As the girls' team beat five school records, she was a part of four: the 200 Medley Relay, 200 Individual Medley, 100 Butterfly and 100 Freestyle.

"Breaking four records in one day was pretty exciting, especially for the relay. Sharing that moment with those girls was amazing," Schaefer said.

Her coach was also very pleased with the girls' performance at WPIALs.

"In the weeks leading up to the WPIAL championship meet, the coaches suspected all the swimmers had the chance to swim really well at that meet. To the extent the girls performed though, setting 5 new school records, you always hope for something like that to happen," Coach Keith Simmons said.

Other members of the record-breaking relays were Jenna Stanton, Abby Banze, and Claire Blaha for the 200 Medley Relay, and Jenna Stanton, Olivia DiBon, Sara Magoun, and Claire Blaha for the 200 Freestyle Relay, closing the season positively.

After a few scratches for States qualifiers, Schaefer actually achieved her goal and made it to the State Championship which took place Friday, March 17.

As for Evan Kelly, his diving career only began his freshman year when a teammate approached him about the opportunity.

Since the Shaler Area pool does not have a diving facility, Kelly and other divers must practice at the Hampton pool. It is because of his own teammates, as well as the Hampton divers that Kelly ultimately stuck with the sport.

"When I was a kid, my dad would kind of throw me up in the air and I'm small and flexible enough to sort of do whatever. I would dive off of a diving board at this one lake too, but what really made me get into diving was being such good friends with the other divers, especially the Hampton divers. They are really accepting of me," Kelly said.

As for training, a lot of it comes down to just throwing himself out there and trying new dives for the first time. With the help of a CD, given to him by his coach, as well as a life jacket to avoid smacking the water at first, Kelly is able to get the feel for just how much rotation and technique he needs to perform the dive.

Because of his devout training, Kelly has been able to perform well enough to qualify for WPIALs every year since his sophomore year, and more notably, this year he was able to set a new school record.

At Butler High School, Kelly impressed the judges by performing his dives with the highest difficulty level yet, with 11.7 points, and executing a dive he had only practiced once before, a back one and a half straight. Knowing he only needed 33 points to break the school record, he put in his best effort and surely enough, it paid off.

"I looked up at the board and I saw a score of 262.35. That is roughly 1 to 2 points higher than the record. I was ecstatic. It's a surreal feeling to be considered the best diver in Shaler history," he said.

As swimming and diving season comes to a close, both Schaefer and Kelly have been considering their future athletic goals.

Schaefer will be attending Allegheny College next year to continue her swimming career, while Kelly is still unsure where next year will take him.

"I would love to continue diving if I find a college that offers it and I actually choose that college but if I don't, I will still practice on the side just to enjoy the sport," Kelly said.



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Schwartz continues to excel at Colorado University

by Cece Robinson

During her time as part of the Shaler Area Cross Country and Track team, Brianna Schwartz was the outdoor and indoor state champion her junior year and was the state champion in cross-country during her senior year. Schwartz also participated in other events such as the Foot Locker Championship, which she placed 6th, was awarded the prestigious accolade of being Gatorade's Pennsylvania State Cross Country runner of the year (2015), and holds six Track and Field records.

She left Shaler Area in 2015 and decided to continue her education and running career at Colorado University.

Arriving at Colorado University after such a successful high school career, she said she felt the most pressure from herself not her coaches.

"I definitely felt high expectations coming onto the team, but I think most of that was just from myself, not my coaches. No one treated me differently because mostly everyone on the team had great success in high school. Everyone forgets about their past accomplishments and aims to prove themselves at the collegiate level," Schwartz said.

Recruited by the school for her amazing talent and drive, she is happy to say that she is still running for the school. Adjusting to balancing her classes and practices, just as any college athlete has to do, was not as hard as she thought and was glad for the large number of freshmen on the team.

"After getting used to the schedule and balancing classes with practice, it became really fun. The transition was made easier by the large number of freshmen we had on the team. There were seven other girls and four boys in our freshmen class. We were able to help each other find our way," Schwartz said.

As soon as the cross country season began the ease that she once had when school started quickly dissolved.

"Once classes started, our schedules were so busy. Freshmen athletes are required to log 6 hours a week in study hall and we had tutors on top of that. We practice every day from 2-6pm so we have to schedule all of our classes before 2, meaning most days start as early as 8am. Then, tutoring and study hall hours had to be done after practice. So, we had a lot of resources to help with our classes, but finding time to eat and relax between classes and practices was difficult," Schwartz said.

In comparison to the Shaler Area Cross Country team, Colorado University has workouts every day, but the intensity level is increasingly higher. When practice isn't scheduled, training on the "off days" is a must.

On team training days, a mountain run is one of her favorite things.

"For the team's long runs every Sunday, we drive off campus to run different routes on dirt roads that our coach has found. Two or three of the runs are

STEAM seniors finish in 3rd

from page 1

the day, under the supervision of Stadelman.

Other teachers involved were Mr. Paul Stadelman, Mr. Dennis Dudley, Mr. Craig Wells, Mr. Brian Seybert, Mr. Jeff Frank, and Mrs. Mindy Thiel.

Stadelman was also one of the main sponsors for the event.

"(During STEAM events) I think students get to do some hands-on activities that challenge their critical thinking and problems solving skills. It is also a great activity to see students work as a team to achieve a common goal or task. I think it gives each student an opportunity to take charge and lead their peers to work together," Stadelman said.

The teams had varying levels of success and were rewarded for their efforts at the award ceremonies. North Allegheny Sr. High finished first, North Allegheny Intermediate High School finished second, and Shaler Area finished third.

The team from Shaler Area consisted of seniors Michael Bagwell, Taylor Jones, Allie Graf, Cory Nasiadka and Michael Dunn.

"Our team spent at least 30 hours constructing the vehicle, but the racing in the end was really impressive. We spent a few days after school working on driving the vehicle blindfolded. I had a lot of fun, and was able to grow really close with my team too," Dunn said.

Overall, the school's all did very well, and were able to tackle new opportunities and new challenges as well.

"The results were great. No matter what level the team entered, there were successes to be seen by all involved. Also it was great for the teaching staff to see what great things our students are capable of and to have a team of teachers, no matter what discipline, in working with our students," Stadelman said.



Bri Schwartz (left) with one of her Colorado teammates (Brianna Schwartz)

actually in the mountains. The longest drive takes about 30 minutes and is over 8000ft elevation. The runs are so hard, but the views are beautiful and makes the pain worth it," Schwartz said.

For the 2016 cross country season Schwartz participated in the Road Runner Invitational and in the Bradley Classic.

"I competed this fall in cross country. I placed 10th at the Road Runner Invitational in Denver and 63rd in the Bradley Classic in Peoria, Illinois. These were my first times running a 6k cross country race. It was hard but fun," Schwartz said.

Aside from running cross country, Schwartz has chosen to major in Journalism and is minoring in a program called Technology, Media, and Arts.

She also hopes to incorporate her love and talent for running into her future career.

"I am studying Journalism and I am minoring in a program called Technology, Arts and Media. It's a program that teaches technical skills and programs like Adobe Creative Cloud and theoretical and historical courses on technology in society. I'm on the digital journalism track so I will definitely want to use the skills I learn from TAM (Technology, Arts, and Media) to not just write stories but to produce videos and photos. I would love to

have that involve running, health, or just sports in general," Schwartz said.

Being so far away from home, she always makes sure to make a phone call to home almost every day to help herself feel a little bit closer to home. Because of the time demanding schedule she has when cross-country is in season, along with classes, she is almost too busy to even think about missing home, but she said the "family like feel" that Shaler Area brings is what she misses most.

"I miss the close community and seeing my friends and teammates every day," Schwartz said.

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PA Speaker of the House balances politics and family

Mike Turzai visited Shaler Area last month to talk state government, political life and current issues

by *Bridget Nickel & Shannon O'Leary*

When it comes to taking on responsibility, Pennsylvania Speaker of the House Mike Turzai endures it all as he works to be both a family man and significant political figure.

First elected in 2000 into the House of Representatives, local Mike Turzai who lives in the North Allegheny School District, has been elected for the second time as Pennsylvania Speaker of the House this past November. As a republican in a House with a republican majority, Turzai was unanimously elected by both his republican and democratic colleagues, taking on a lot of responsibility, both within his workplace and outside.

While a lot of full-time jobs consist of regular daytime hours in one general area, Turzai's job is very different, as he has to constantly travel and meet with different people, all the while trying to balance his home life with his wife, Lidia, and three sons, Andrew, Matthew and Stephen.

Having sons in eighth, eleventh and twelfth grade, Turzai has made it a priority to maintain his fatherly figure to them despite his tough job. He tries to balance his schedule so that attending a meeting or any other work conflict rarely interferes with being able to attend their sporting and other school events.

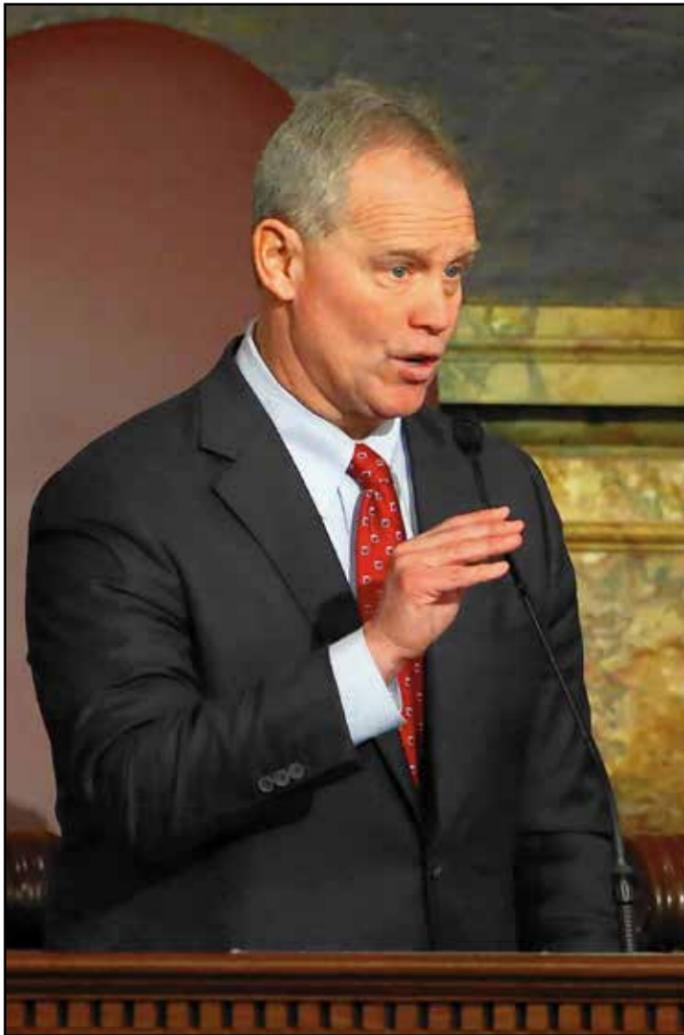
Taking flights when possible or using other staff members to aid him in the car during trips, he has made it possible to be home for many of his sons' events throughout the past few years.

"You get used to traveling and you can get a lot of work done in a car. I have hands-free and sometimes I take one of the staff with me because I know I'll be driving eight hours. I have missed some things and particularly a couple years I have missed more than I would have liked, but I don't miss much. If you're disciplined about it, you can just say, This is the time I gotta go and this is the time I gotta be home," he said.

As for actually executing all of his duties, traveling and schedule balancing are huge components of his job. Although Harrisburg is the state capital, he also has to account for other populous areas like Scranton, Allentown, Lancaster, York, State College and Erie.

"Balancing between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg is the toughest part of the job. As the Speaker and majority leader, I am not only in Harrisburg. I have to be in Philadelphia lot because it and its surrounding counties make up about 40% of the population of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania," he said.

This amount of traveling is necessary because as Speaker of the House, Turzai functions as the head of the lower house of the state legislature, acting as a spokesman for the chamber, watching over legisla-



PA Speaker of the House Mike Turzai

tive sessions to ensure that all rules are abided by. He also directs the legislative process and performs other administrative and procedural duties. Because Republicans are the majority, his power is even more significant.

"The power of being in the majority is a big power. You get to decide which bills get introduced and are actually voted upon. Even within the same party, it sometimes creates tension because a lot of people have different ideas," Turzai said.

Despite his chance of potentially becoming a member of Congress, Turzai decided to instead focus on a position in which he could have more of a leadership role.

"I had opportunities to run for Congress a few times and I did not do it. I think I would've won but I knew I had the opportunity to become majority leader and Speaker and I thought it would be good to be in charge of something whereas in Washington, D.C. I wouldn't have had the chance to do that," Turzai said.

Meeting with Governor Tom Wolf about once every three weeks, Turzai works to find issues and concerns that they can push forward to fix, taking

more action on the state level than the federal government has done in the past six years.

"Basically the federal government has been at a stand-still, at least for the last six years. It's been a divided government with both sides unwilling to work with each other. On the state level though, we have been working on what we call democratic experiments and actions. We are very proactive. Though we have had some significant disagreements we have actually moved the ball forward a little bit," Turzai explained.

One of the necessary goals at the state level includes passing a balanced budget. In order to do so, the revenues coming in have to match the expenditures that go out. Most of those expenditures have to do with education, human services and law enforcement/prison systems.

"We are responsible for spending your hard earned dollars responsibly. How we keep up with expenditures without taxing people more than they can afford dominates a lot of time," Turzai said.

Despite the conflict between President Trump and the media, that publicity really has only been seen at the federal level and has not affected Republicans on the state level.

"We do not have media bias anywhere near the same level as the federal government because we don't have that kind of coverage on the state level," Turzai said.

As for other issues the state government has to deal with, controversial topics such as medical marijuana, gas taxes and natural gas implications were discussed.

Despite its legalization medically, Turzai is a strong opponent of marijuana usage, stating he sees it as a gateway drug and legalizing medical use is one step closer to recreational legalization.

"It grabs a hold of your life. I've seen it destroy people and you want to stay away from this stuff. It's entrepreneurial, like a license to make money. We're giving people the monopoly to grow it and to sell it and to me I don't care what kind of revenue it brings in. It's a big no from me," Turzai said.

Although he is strongly against legalizing marijuana, he is in favor of decriminalization to some extent, as placing people in jail is not as effective as education.

"I don't think it can be eradicated but I do think education can bring the numbers down. But I don't think you can keep putting people in jail; it's too costly and jails are supposed to be about reforming people's lives partly," Turzai said.

Millvale Library offers new programs for youth

by *Ceari Robinson*

The Millvale Community Library is adding many new and exciting programs to its ever-growing young adult section.

Ms. Nora Peters, head of programing at the library, has been revamping the young adult programs with both out-of-the-box and community-oriented clubs/programs.

The newest addition to the Library is the "Art and Soul" program. Overseen through the Schweitzer Fellowship, this program is facilitated by Duquesne University students who are in the school of health and psychology.

Samantha Ryald, who leads the program, focuses not only on the therapeutic side of art, but also on expanding the minds of the youth involved in the program. The club meets every Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. and every Saturday from 1-3 p.m. new members, ages 12-17, are always welcome.

"The aim of this program is to introduce youth to new types of art and ways of exploring their creativity. Each week features a specific art project that encourages the participants to stretch their imaginations and spark inspiration," Peters said.

Newest to the list of clubs the library offers is the Teen Book Club, which

meets every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. Geared for ages 13-17, novels are chosen by the participants and the club's main goal is to hang out and talk about good books. The graphic novel "Watchmen" is what the club is currently reading.

Pizza is ordered for every meeting and the club not only discusses the book, but it does critical-thinking exercises and writing prompts. The club has just begun Peters is eager for new members to join.

During the summer, the Millvale Community Library also offers those who desire a more in-depth experience with art two exciting opportunities.

The Mobile Sculpture Workshop begins in the summer and is a job opportunity for those who want to learn how to weld. Meeting only three to four times during the summer, participants travel around to different places in Pittsburgh, receive training and then teach others how to weld.

Another opportunity the library offers is for ages 13 and up. During two weeks at the end of July and beginning of August, eight art apprenticeships are offered in the Strip District. During those two weeks participants "work" in the shop of a specific art vendor learning the trade. Transportation and lunch is provided.

Please feel free to contact Peters via email, norameters@gmail.com, if you have any questions regarding the clubs mentioned above.

Special swim program looking for volunteers

by Gabrielle Girton

Shaler Adaptive Aquatics for Health (S.A.A.H.) needs volunteers in order to help provide swim lessons for children in the community.

S.A.A.H. is a program started in 1982 by the mother of a child with special needs. She wanted to create an organization that would include children in after-school activities like swimming, because most swim programs do not have the equipment needed to teach children with special needs.

She ran the program until 2008, when she handed it off to Jim and Julie McDermott, who had both worked as volunteers for the swim lessons when they were in high school. Both work as teachers in the Shaler Area school district, and have been volunteering with S.A.A.H. for almost 10 years.

Jim McDermott works as the administrator for the program, and helps schedule all the events. He also coordinates the waitlist and availability slots in

the program.

"I have no problem taking care of paperwork and sending out group emails. I can do that. And yeah, I give up hour and a half on Sundays, but I think the program is really important, so I don't mind," McDermott said.

The program takes place at the indoor pool at Shaler Area Elementary School on Sundays from 11:20 until 12:30. The Winter session ended April 5th and will pick back up on the 3rd Sunday of June at Kiwanis.

S.A.A.H. is volunteer based, and depends on high schoolers to get involved in order to allow as many children as possible to take part in the lessons.

"(S.A.A.H.) relies on volunteers to give kids the chance to do an activity like swimming, which they can't really do in a normal swim lesson. A lot of times the teachers at those lessons tell the parents that they can't teach (special needs kids) because they don't have the necessary materials, so they refer them to

us," McDermott said.

Currently, there are approximately 15 children who partake in the lessons, and around five on the waiting list. In order for all the students to be able to participate, more high schoolers are needed to help. There will be an adaptive aquatics instructor at the lessons to assist, so volunteers do not need to be an expert swimmer, but simply need to be reliable and show up at the lessons.

Although swimming is the main part of S.A.A.H., they do several fun group events throughout the year. They have a summer picnic, fall hayride, and Christmas party.

"The kids are really fun. They are just kids when it comes down to it. In fact, some volunteers end up enjoying the program so much that they choose related activities for their careers," McDermott said.

If you are interested in helping out with this meaningful program, contact Mr. McDermott in room 324, or send an email to saah.swimming@gmail.com

Veterans Courts offer better trial experience to Vets

by Kaitlin Parente

While many are aware of the functions and workings of traditional courts, either through court experience or TV shows such as "Law and Order", many are not as well versed in the specialized courts that tailor to specific needs of those in the legal system.

Veterans Court is a court made to assist veterans with mental disorders, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, drug/alcohol addiction and reintegration through the regular court systems. This court is the combination of Mental Health Courts and Drug Courts, centered towards helping veterans through the legal system.

Veterans Court, Mental Health Court and Drug Court are all problem-solving courts.

Judge John Zottola, a judge on the Veterans Court in Allegheny County, believes that Veterans Court is the best option for those who have served in the armed forces and have experienced any of the ailments as listed above.

Veterans Court, and problem solving courts as a whole, differ from a regular judicial court for a multitude of reasons.

The main difference in problem solving courts is the judge's role. In a traditional court, the judge works towards dispute resolution, whereas problem solving courts work towards dispute avoidance.

A problem solving court's goal is to successfully keep law violators out of prison and to work with them to fix any problems or issues that may have caused them to commit a crime. Whether it is therapy sessions or medical sessions, the goal is to reboot law violators into law abiding citizens.

In a traditional court, there is a hearing, a jury and a decision. That decision leads towards a possible punishment. However, in a problem solving court, there are multiple meetings to work towards a better life and a better court outcome for the offender.

"I've handled death penalty cases, I've handled the cases that make their way into the newspaper, but the best work I've ever been able to do is work with the problem solving courts that do change people's lives," Zottola said.

Problem solving courts are also proving to be more beneficial to the community as well.

"It's the right thing to do. In this society, we're tired of the revolving door of putting people in jail and releasing them and it doesn't make any sense. We have problem-solving courts because they save money," Zottola said.

In a study done in 2007, commissioned by the court legislature and completed at the Pittsburgh headquarters for the RAND Corporation, it was found that problem solving courts saved taxpayers \$3.6 million by

keeping criminals out of jail and lowering the recidivism rates.

In a Veterans Court, the Veterans go through three phases to better themselves as community members.

"When they start the process, there are two initial sessions in Veterans Court. The first session is a staffing session where the team discusses each individual's cases. Once we're done going through staffing, we bring each individual up and we speak to them for 4-5 minutes explaining why we think they have a positive review or a negative review of what they've been doing since we've seen them last," Zottola said.

During the first session, many questions regarding what the veterans are doing are asked, such as: "Is the veteran going to therapy sessions, doctor's appointments and following the guidelines?"

If these questions result in positive answers, the veterans can be rewarded for their progress, such as moving on to the next phase or receiving rewards, such as a military style dog tag

"When they proceed from one phase to another, you want to give them a reward. I didn't know what to give them, so I relied on veterans to tell me. We give them dog tags. I didn't realize that dog tags would be important to

someone, but they are very important. When our veterans come in they wear their dog tags from their prior phases because it's something important to them," Zottola said.

However, if these questions result in negative answers, sanctions can be put on the veterans, such as writing essays on how to better their recovery, enforcing a curfew or house arrest.

Because Veterans Court is a combination of two other problem solving courts, issues such as mental disorders and drug/alcohol abuse need to be considered throughout the court process.

Zottola teaches Mental Health Law at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and finds great importance in understanding criminals who have mental disorders to properly handle their cases in a courtroom setting.

"I tell my students that each one of them as lawyers should go through at least mental health first aid so that they have an understanding of what is going on with their client. I think during my career I have not punished anyone under those circumstances, which is why I tell my students to be trained with those kinds of issues so that you can be able to help your client," Zottola said.

Duquesne University ensures that law students have a better understanding of how mental disorders can affect court cases. Duquesne uses a special training system called Hearing Voices, which stimulates the mind of someone with a mental disorder so the students.

"Students receive earphones that they have to wear to simulate someone who would hear voices. The voices go back and forth saying, 'You're no good!' or, 'You're this and that!' Then the trainers are also telling them that you have to go to a bank or you have to go to a car wash or different things while you're hearing these voices. It gives the law students empathy for someone that may be going through

PTSD," Zottola said.

Because of this specific training that Duquesne uses, the Veterans Court uses Duquesne Law students as the public defenders for veterans in court.

Another big helping hand in Veterans Courts comes from the Veterans Hospital. The Veterans Hospital supplies veterans with doctors appointments, therapy sessions and Vivitrol, the best opiod blocker on the market, for those who use opioids.

If Vivitrol injections are a part of the veteran's recovery plan through the court, it is necessary that they receive their injections every month to prevent them from using again.

"If someone misses an injection and does not reschedule within a day, we issue an arrest warrant for them. Not because we want to punish them, but we want to protect them we have to get them off of the streets to make sure they don't start using again," Zottola said.

A mentor system is also used to assist the veterans in their recovery through the Veterans Court.

The mentor program is run by the Veteran Leadership Program, a non-profit in Allegheny County that provides services for veterans including employment, housing, bus passes and they also provide mentors for the Veterans Courts.

"When mentors come to court or when they receive information that their mentee is having some difficulty they are able to reach out and say, 'Look, this is what you need to do,' and the mentee often listens because they say 'I've been there; I understand.' Now it's your turn to understand what you need to do.' That's a crucial thing in our court," Zottola said.

However, the most important aspect about Veterans Court is that no veteran gets left behind.

"We made a determination that no one will be left behind if they're in our Veterans Court. If someone is ineligible for benefits or the Veterans Hospital tells them they will not receive benefits, our Department of Human Services in Allegheny County covers those individuals. No one in our court that is a veteran gets left behind," Zottola stressed.

"We're tired of the revolving door of putting people in jail and releasing them ... We have problem-solving courts because they save money."

-- Judge John Zottola

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M	O	S	S	O	L	B	Y	R	R	E	H	C	D	E
U	P	O	C	H	E	H	E	I	A	A	A	W	P	N
I	E	C	A	U	K	M	G	L	T	E	A	B	A	S
N	T	D	L	J	W	O	P	Y	P	U	L	H	N	D
A	U	B	Q	X	L	E	E	M	W	P	L	A	S	T
R	N	G	S	D	O	Y	P	P	O	P	A	I	Z	F
E	I	A	I	N	E	D	R	A	G	Y	D	R	P	A
G	A	R	Y	T	P	R	I	M	R	O	S	E	G	S
Z	Y	N	O	P	S	K	L	I	L	A	C	S	P	P

- AppleBlossom
- Azalea
- Blue Bells
- Calla Lily
- CherryBlossom
- Cosmos
- Dahlia
- Daisy
- Gardenia
- Geranium
- Hyacinth
- Impatiens
- Lilacs
- Lily
- Marigolds
- Pansy
- Peony
- Poppy
- Primrose
- Snapdragon
- Sunflowers
- Tulips



WEIRD News

An Idaho motorist told the local sheriff's department that a Bigfoot sighting caused her to crash her car last Wednesday night.

According to Pullman Radio, the woman, who was not identified, told the Latah County Sheriff's Office that she saw a Sasquatch chasing a deer on a stretch of US-95 outside of Potlatch.

She said the creature was "shaggy" and between 7 and 8 feet tall, the Moscow-Pullman Daily News reported.

The woman checked her mirrors to see the Bigfoot, but as her eyes re-adjusted to the road she hit the deer with her Subaru Forester, the newspaper said.

Pullman Radio reported that the woman continued driving, picked up her husband from work then drove to the sheriff's office to report the incident. Officers did not find any evidence of Bigfoot at the scene of the crash.

The radio station reported that the 50-year-old driver suffered a "minor neck injury."

According to police, Drum said she did not know how the gun ended up in her husband's hand.

There's a new sheriff - actually a principal - in town in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

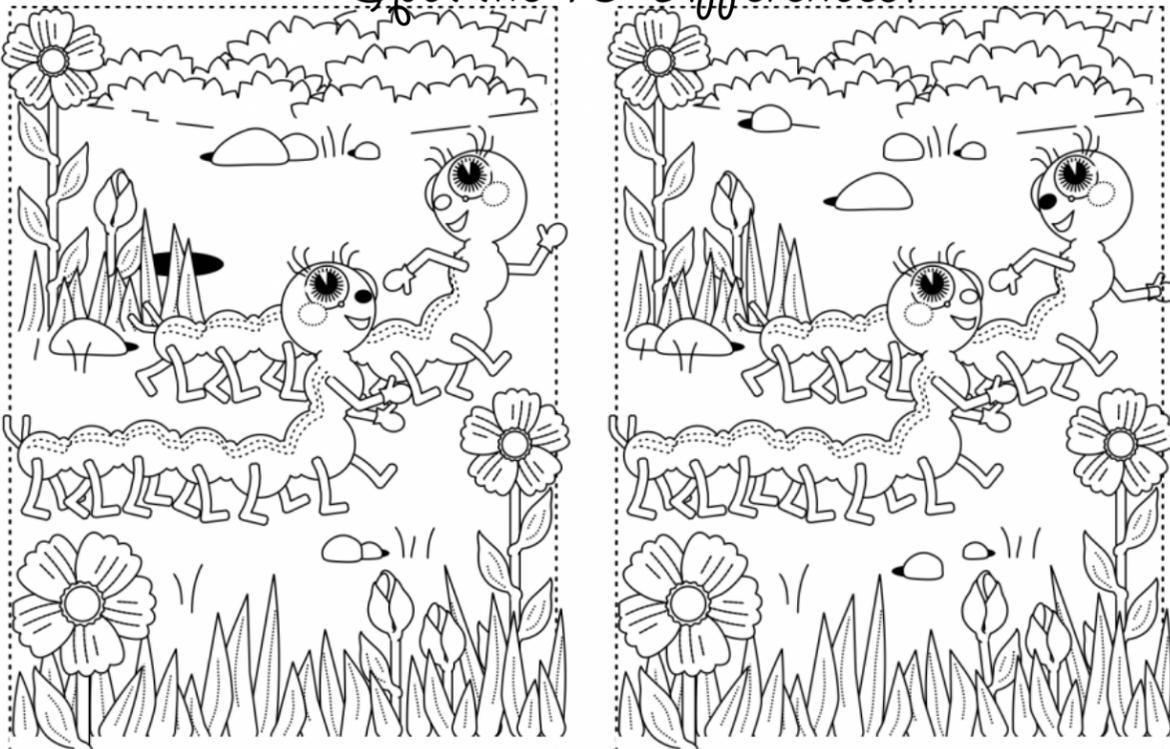
After taking over in January, Lisa Love issued suspension notices to almost half of the 1,100 students at Harrisburg High School, PennLive reported.

Officials handed out 500 suspension notices at the beginning of this week as part of a truancy crackdown.

They said many parents were able to provide documentation so previous absences would not be recorded as unexcused.

Love said she wanted to do something "radical" to send a message amid the school's struggles with low test scores and graduation rates.

Spot the 10 Differences!



1. rock in upper left corner is removed, 2. rock in upper middle area moved, 3. nose is blacked out, 4. nose is whited out, 5. tulip in upper left corner is reversed, 6. black hole next to tulip is removed, 7. rock below daisy in upper left corner removed, 8. hand is shifted downward, 9. tulip in bottom right is reversed, 10. rock in lower middle area shifted

THE GRID		Worst excuse you've ever heard	Favorite fictional character	What would people be surprised to know about you?	Do you have any side jobs?	I hope Donald Trump _____
Mr. Koller		A kid cheated on an assignment and said that if they didn't get it done they'd be grounded by the person who helped them do it	V from "V is for Vendetta"	I grew up on a cattle ranch and was a cowboy pretty much	A tutor and painter	Ends up in prison
Mrs. Loudon		I couldn't print my essay because there was a stink bug jammed in the printer	Anne Shirley	I have a temper	Chauffeur, chef, laundress, housekeeper, economist, tutor, nurse...	Would listen to opposing view points
Mr. Sarkis		My dog ate my printer	Sgt. Schultz from "Hogan's Heroes"	I was not a good student. Well behaved, but poorly motivated	Crowd control and security specialist	Gives me lots and lots of his money
Mr. McDermott		I don't take excuses	The horse from "Tangled"	I have never used a tobacco product	No way!	Cools down and gets to work