

# The Oracle

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## “Radium Girls” proves challenging for cast, audience

by James Engel

For this year’s fall play, Shaler Area High School drifted away from the fictional tales audiences have grown accustomed to. Students performed “Radium Girls”, the true story of young women in a New Jersey radium watch painting plant.

The women became afflicted with radium poisoning and other ailments resulting from the radioactive substance. For the sake of justice and to receive compensation for their suffering, the women face down the US Radium Corporation in a lawsuit.

This play left behind last year’s mystical “Alice in Wonderland” and instead chose to show the audience a true story of struggle and perseverance. This turn towards reality led the play’s actors into new, more lifelike, scenes.

“I had the opportunity to play a character that is very different from any other character I’ve ever portrayed,” senior Alex Almonte, who played Arthur Roeder, the president of the US Radium Corporation said.

This transition out of the fictional universe did not come without some difficulty. Having to convey the actions and emotions of a real person places a great deal more pressure on the actors.

“There was a point of uneasiness when it came



Junior Sonny DeMasi, senior Bella James and senior Kelsey Marshall.

closer to the show. I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to portray this true story the way it should be, and that we wouldn’t be giving the Radium Girls the justice they deserve,” junior Sonny DeMasi, who played Tom Kreider, the husband of one of the afflicted women said.

After the curtain fell, many audience members

were in tears, others were in disbelief, and others still were angry that a situation like the one performed could even arise. The show provided an accurate and emotional portrayal of the struggle of these women. It seems justice was done on stage.

“We made people angry, we made people sad, some were happy that the girls got justice, but everyone who came to see it seemed to appreciate it for what it was,” senior Bella James, who played Kathryn Schaub, one of the most defiant of the afflicted women, said.

Not only did the play provide an emotional experience for the audience, but it also shed a light on a part of American history that is not often examined.

“I know a whole lot of people went home after the show and researched more on their own, and that’s what we wanted them to do,” senior Kelsey Marshall, who played Grace Fryer, the play’s protagonist said.

“Radium Girls” gave audiences something new. It was emotional, raw, and most importantly, real. This year’s play can be marked down as another success in the line of excellent Shaler Area productions.

“I think it is the best show we have ever done,” co-director Mrs. Anne Loudon said.

## School district makes decision to limit FID use

Concerns include district readiness, student access to online assignments, student participation

by Ashley Llana

Flexible Instructional Days are a new approach that is being taken by the state of Pennsylvania towards school cancellation days. Flexible Instructional Days, also known as FID, have become popular throughout multiple school districts in western Pennsylvania.

FID have been introduced as an alternate way to instruct students when school is cancelled due to inclement weather, technical difficulties, or other unexpected circumstances. This idea is being implemented in order to prevent breaks from being shortened when there are multiple make-up days.

The FID program allows districts to assign lessons to students on days that in-class instruction is cancelled. Flexible Instructional Days involve teachers creating assignments that can either be sent home to students throughout the school year to be used for an emergency or posted on online sites, such as Google Classroom, on the day of the cancellation. The number of Flexible Instructional Days used may not exceed five days per school year.

Over the summer, Shaler Area School District received an email from the Pennsylvania Department of Education stating that a window was being opened to apply to use Flexible Instructional Days. However, the email

was received at the beginning of August and the application was due at the beginning of September. In the application, it was necessary to include lesson plans and curriculum information in order to be approved.

The Shaler Area School District pursued the application in order to have the opportunity to use FID. The application was approved by both the school board and the state.

“We were one of the first school districts in Western Pennsylvania to actually get approved this year,” Superintendent Mr. Sean Aiken said.

Despite the fact that the district got approved for FID so quickly, they felt as though the application process was rushed and could have been done in a more orderly fashion.

After getting approved for the Flexible Instructional Days, the district then began to explore how they could be used in the 2019-2020 school year.

The district began to reach out to nearby schools to see how they might use the program, but because FID are new, it was difficult to get information

on the success of the program. Additionally, other nearby districts build in make-up days for cancellations, so they did not see a need for FID.

Because the FID program is new, the district is not sure exactly how this plan will work. Shaler Area also values

in-class instruction, and losing a chunk of days due to inclement weather is not something that the district sees as beneficial. Therefore, the district will not use flexible instructional days for weather and will use them for circumstances

such as water main breaks or power outages for the 2019-2020 school year. There is still a possibility that FID will be used for snow cancellation days in future school years.

“The possible closure of a school due to an emergency is typically a decision that pertains solely to that school. For example, a water main break, power outage, etc. is usually contained to an area and would affect only schools in that area. A decision to cancel school for that school only affects that school and not the other six schools in the district. A closing due to inclement weather affects all 4200 students and over

**“I just don’t think that right now our plan for the flexible instructional days is a good plan for all 4,200 students in the district.”**

**-- Mr. Sean Aiken, Superintendent**

400 staff members,” Aiken said.

Although Aiken knows portions of students would have no problem getting assigned work completed on time, it is a concern from the district that the loss of instructional time in class would not be beneficial to everyone.

“We’re a school district. We value time in seats and time in front of your teacher,” Aiken said.

Aiken is concerned that throughout the district that all students do not have the capability of getting their work done on their own outside of school. Another aspect of Flexible Instructional Days that worries the district is that not all students are able to access assignments online from their homes.

Although FID are one of the possible solutions to having to make up cancellations, the district may, in the future, consider ways to build more days into the schedule so that spring break is not shortened.

Aiken is aware that students dread having to make up snow days. Even though flexible instructional days are being put on hold for snow days, Aiken is not against the idea of implementing them in the future for all emergency circumstances. He thinks the program needs to be explored more before it is put in place across the district.

“I just don’t think that right now our plan for the flexible instructional days is a good plan for all 4,200 students in the district,” he said.

# OPINIONS

## Concert policy showed benefit of putting phone away

by Michaela Brining

As a teenage girl living in modern day America, it is almost impossible for me to set down my phone. It's become a physical part of my right arm, extending past my fingertips, like a prosthetic. Let's be honest, we are all like this. We are all addicted to our phones.

There becomes a point when we need to turn them off and tune into what is happening around us. A couple weeks ago, I had the opportunity to go see Tool live at PPG Paints Arena. Prior to the concert, I did some research and discovered that Tool had a strict, "no phones policy".

If you were found on your phone during the concert, you would be asked to leave and never return to a Tool concert again.

The night before the concert, an article was published about Tool's most recent show in Philadelphia. A man was taken out of the arena for being on his phone. He wasn't even allowed to grab his jacket.

I thought this was a little too intense. What if I wanted to play GamePigeon? What if I had to text my mom? What if there was an emergency? At first I thought this "no phones policy" was ridiculous.

**Not being on my phone for that concert was one of the best experiences of my life...Everyone was just vibing. No one was distracted by blue lights or notifications. Everyone was enjoying the music...that's the way it should be. Turn off your phone, cut off the distractions and just simply enjoy good music.**

I was wrong.

Not being on my phone for that concert was one of the best experiences of my life. I was just vibing. Everyone was just vibing. No one was distracted by blue lights or notifications. Everyone was enjoying the music. And if you ask me, that's the way it should be. Turn off your phone, cut off the distractions and just simply enjoy good music.

Although this policy seems a little strict, it is one of the best decisions a performer could make. Having a "no phones policy" eliminates the risk of an audience member recording the show and publicly displaying it through social media or other outlets.

This policy does more than protect the artists rights, it gives the audience the full experience that they paid for. More artists should adopt this policy.

I have to say that the best part of the Tool concert was the very end. The lead singer, Maynard James Keenan, allowed the audience to have their phones out for the last song. And the crazy thing was very few people pulled theirs out.

People took a quick picture and then immediately put it away. There was no reason to be on your phone. We were all entranced by the music.

The next time I go to a concert, I'm turning off my phone, whether it is enforced or not. It enhances the experience, letting me enjoy the music for what it is.

And for that matter, I'm turning my phone off more in general. When I'm around my friends and family, I shouldn't be consumed by the screen in my hand. I should be paying attention to the world around me and live in the moment.

We should all do this. We should just turn off our phones and vibe with the people around us, enjoying the world through our own eyes, not through that of a screen.

## Better than LeBron? Don't go there

by Dominic DiTommaso

Nowadays, things get older by the SportsCenter highlight.

The media is constantly telling you that this player or that player is an all-time great. This player or that player is the greatest player to come into the league in years. And now, we have found the next LeBron James.

Luka Dončić?

Maybe we have. I just don't see it.

For the record, I did like Doncic before the draft. He does have creativity when it comes to passing. He has the rare passing feel to the game. He has the vision and the anticipation, and I'll throw in unselfishness, to pass the basketball.

Yet, I get so offended when many start comparing this young man to LeBron James. Lighting might strike us all the next time someone utters Luka Dončić in the same breath as the all-time greatest basketball player.

Let's be honest, No. 77 is nowhere close to No. 23.

In his rookie year, Dončić went 33-49 and his team finished second-to-last in the Western Conference. Just for comparison, James, in his rookie year, was the ninth seed in the East, one slot out of the playoffs.

Yet Dončić is "all-time great"?

Right now, Dončić is shooting 31% from three, which ranks 137th in the NBA. What shocks me is he's tied for the fourth-most three-point attempts. He has some clutchness to him, but he is somewhat of a liability, because he's jacking up so many threes and missing so many of them. Right now, he's

missed 81.

This kid is "an MVP candidate"?

As a rookie, Dončić was shooting 71% -- 71% -- from the free-throw line. And one fateful night last year against San Antonio, on March the 12, he went 1-9 -- 1-9 -- from the free-throw line. That is pathetic. No "superstar" goes 1-9 from the free-throw line. Michael Jordan never thought about going 1-9 from the free-throw line. Larry Bird never dreamt that, yet he's a common comparison to Dončić for many. James was 75% from the free-throw line his rookie year. And Dončić was 71%. Not a huge difference, but still a difference.

Yet this kid is "the greatest player to come into the league in years"?

The problem I have with Dončić is that he doesn't play a blink of defense. James can defend and disrupt on defense. Dončić cannot. Right now, Dončić ranks 252nd in defensive win shares. James, right now, is 5th, and in his rookie season he was 130th and in his second season he was 38th.

Luka Dončić couldn't guard me.

He is a defensive liability. Yet this kid is "the next LeBron James".

I know, I know: he is just 20.

James was never given a pass when he first came into the league for his age, so this young man certainly isn't.

And I'll give you this: Dončić is fun to watch. He has offensive artistry and, again, the knack of passing the basketball. He is starting to grow on me. I just can't give you "superstar" right now when he's going 31% from three and 71% from the free-throw line. Those aren't "superstar" numbers.

What happened a few Friday's

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*Have something to say?*

*Have a story idea you want us to cover?*

*Have a reaction (good or bad) to one of our topics?*

**Email us -- oracle@sasd.k12.pa.us**

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*You might see your comments printed here in our next paper*

### The Oracle

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

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

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

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# Anti-Flag drummer talks politics, music, activism

by James Engel

Pat Thetic is the drummer for Pittsburgh punk rock band Anti-Flag. He is a graduate of Shaler Area High School, and still practices in Shaler today. Anti-Flag is a politically motivated band, often incorporating social issues and human rights into its music. The band has toured throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. They currently have over 700,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, and will release a new album, "20/20 Vision", in January.

**Q: How did you get your start in music?**

**A:** I went to school here. Justin, who I started the band with, did not go to Shaler. Justin and I played club soccer together. We were both (expletive)-ups and weirdos who no one else wanted to hang out with. We also didn't do drugs or drink alcohol, which made us less interesting to other people. So, we found that we came together and played music on a Friday night instead of going to a party. The band kind of started by being outcasts in the places we lived. When you become an outcast in one society, you create another society.

**Q: Was the band political from the start, or did it evolve into politics?**

**A:** We have always had social justice and revolutionary views as people, and that translated into the music we created. When we were young we were angry at everything, and we were not as educated, aware, or exposed to a lot of different issues. We didn't understand why we were angry, but we were. It seems like people in Shaler strive for mediocrity. There is no excellence, we're just trying to achieve baseline, which is a (expletive) place to be. That made me angry. I wanted something that was better, I wanted something that was different, I wanted something that wasn't as vanilla and white as the Shaler experience was. I wanted something that was more multicultural, I wanted new ideas. I realized that the ideas that were coming at me in the place I lived were boring and tired, and I wanted something new. We were looking for something; Politics and Activism were a way of finding it.

**Q: When you say change and revolution, what does that mean to you?**

**A:** Things don't have to be the way they are, right here. Once you realize that, you see that there are other solutions to problems. When you travel around the world, you realize that the way things are in the United States is not the way things are in other places. You realize that most kids in other places don't have to have metal detectors on their way into school. So, why is that, and how do we make a change? These things are important to me. For me, these all come down to economic issues. The economic disparity between the people with the most and the people with the least causes a lot of these problems. That is the type of change we wish to see.

**Q: Can you tell me about the rise of the band and its early popularity?**

**A:** It is a very different experience from the outside looking in to a band becoming popular and being inside of a band becoming popular. The band has been doing the same thing for the past twenty-five years, more people have come and have been engaged in the band, over time, but that doesn't really change what we do.

We started playing shows, we started shows outside of the Pittsburgh area, we started playing shows outside of the US, all of those things became bigger and bigger and bigger, but there is nothing on the inside that has really changed that much. To become successful, you treat people well, you love what you do, and you are passionate about what you are trying to achieve. If you do those things, you'll figure out how to make a living. It won't be a great living, but it will be enough to survive. All we want to do is to have the freedom to make the choices that we want to make, and have the economic resources to make those choices.

**Q: How has the current administration and the current political climate changed your**

**views, changed the band, and changed the band's views?**

**A:** The aftermath of September 11th showed those of us who were activists and revolutionaries how thin the veneer of democracy and human rights are. After the attacks, powerful people made power grabs and took rights away from people. That's a scary position to be in. We're taught in our civics classes that we have a Bill of Rights, we have a Constitution, we have UN human rights laws, and these things are universal and apply to everyone. The reality is that they don't. They only apply when we all collectively say these are important things and we're going to force them to apply.

With the Trump administration, what we see is that authoritarianism is a real possibility in the US and that people will roll over and allow their rights to be taken away. That is very scary to me, but those are the esoteric visions of it. The fact that he puts kids in cages and is clearly a white supremacist, or at least has dog whistles for white supremacists is screwed up. We actually have a new record, and it has Trump on the cover. It deals with a lot of these issues.

**Q: You've put two new singles out recently, "Christian Nationalist" and "Hate Conquers All"; what message are you trying to send in these songs?**

**A:** "Hate Conquers All" is a statement about the idea of "Love Trump's Hate" and the idea that Trump is simply a hateful person. The reality is that he is much bigger than just a hateful person. He is a person who is trying to take our rights, to take our money, to take our freedom away from us for his own gain. We live in a world that is pretty safe, most of us aren't worried about ICE coming and taking you or your family in the middle of the night. These things are realities in Trump's world and that is something we're talking about in this new record. I, as a white male, have many privileges that other people do not, and we have to be aware that we must protect all people, because if we don't, all of our privileges go away.

"Christian Nationalist" is about the idea in the US that terrorism is created by people of color. The reality is that most terrorism in the US is created by white Christians. It is about how Christianity can perpetuate that this is 'God's will' and other crazy (expletive) that leads to these attacks. The synagogue shooting in Squirrel Hill was perpetrated by a white Christian nationalist.

**Q: How did the Tree of Life shooting affect the band?**

**A:** I was actually having my first child at the very moment that the shooting was happening. It was very much a part of my existence, and the existence of my family. I lived in Squirrel Hill for part of my life after I left Shaler. It is the reality that any jackass with a gun can kill a lot of people. There's a lot of coverage for the top, and Trump, that these beliefs of hate are okay. It's a horrible thing, and we need to stand up against it.

**Q: Anti-Flag is commonly associated with the Anarchist punk movement. Are you an Anarchist?**

**A:** I am more of a Socialist, in the pure sense of the word. I do think we need some sort of government and some sort of structure, but I do think we need a redistribution of the wealth so that everyone



Anti-Flag drummer Pat Thetic talks to Shaler Area students.

can live free and happy without just a few people with all of the money.

**Q: You've been all over the world. What places do you like best?**

**A:** I like Germany and Switzerland a lot. I've been to Hong Kong, which is pretty awesome. They're struggling to defend their rights and freedoms right now. Mexico City is also great. We know that Mexicans are not horrible rapists like Trump says they are, but playing in Mexico really refreshes my faith in humanity, seeing all those amazing people. The same goes for different places in Russia. I was taught growing up that Russia was the enemy, but when you go there and meet them, you realize that they are very nice people.

**Q: How has witnessing political and social movements all over the world affected the band's message?**

**A:** It gives us hope. We go all over the world and meet activists and social justice advocates, and they're all fighting for the betterment of themselves and the people around them. You realize that the idea that everyone is apathetic and no one cares is not true. That is inspiring to us. We also see social justice movements in every city we go to fighting for social issues. I think every kid should take a year, instead of going to college, and travel. Once you see more of the world, you realize that the (expletive) at home doesn't matter, and the issues you might have here aren't real.

**Q: You talked about global movements. What movements are there in Pittsburgh to get involved in?**

**A:** There is lots of movements in Pittsburgh. I usually push people towards bigger organizations like GreenPeace and Amnesty International. They are great because they're already established. There are people fighting against the gentrification of East Liberty, and plenty of movements like that. It all depends on what issues you think are the most important.

**Q: Aside from joining an organization, what can we do, as young individuals, to help the world?**

**A:** You should always be aware of where your information is coming from. Whatever information you're getting always has a particular point of view.

Being able to realize what people have to gain and lose by having certain opinions, and comparing those yourself is important. Being aware and active is critical.

# Tool gives mesmerizing experience

by Max Robinson

“It’s some kind of psychedelic experience, it’s some kind of psychedelic experience, it’s some kind of psychedelic experience...” echoes throughout the arena as everyone watches hypnotically.

Tool is a veteran prog metal band that has been mesmerizing the masses for years now. The band is back on the road for promotion of its new album, *Fear Inoculum*.

Tool puts on a concert experience unlike any other band out there. For starters, the band has a STRICT no phone policy at their live shows. Ushers are instructed to remove anyone from the show if he/she is seen with a phone out, and Tool’s management will not allow those kicked out to return for future shows.

But fans of the band aren’t there to film the show, they are there to become absolutely entranced by the music. Tool came to Pittsburgh on November 8th. Killing Joke, an industrial/rock opened for Tool. The crowd seemed pretty underwhelmed by the opening act. My best guess is they had no clue who Killing Joke was. After all, they were there for Tool.

Tool opened the set with the title track of their new album, a 10-minute-long epic which set the tone for the rest of the show. Throughout the setlist, the visuals were as trance-inducing as the music. Numerous songs had their music videos projected while others featured Tool’s iconic, trippy art style. The videos paired with the lasers and lights provided psychedelic-like experience.

The band played a few fan favorites including “Schism” and “Forty Six & 2”, and the song duo “Parabol” and “Parabola” from the band’s 2001 masterpiece *Lateralus*. “Chocolate Chip Trip” is a cut from the new album, and glimpse into drummer Danny Carey’s mind. He began by solely beating a gong before laying down a techy, drum machine beat and then playing an absolute mind bending drum solo on top of that.

To end the show, the band played another live staple, “Stinkfist”. Frontman Maynard James Keenan allowed the



Tool’s Guitarist, Adam Jones. (Max Robinson)

crowd to film the song, then thanking Pittsburgh “for the ketchup”.

The weird thing about Tool shows is that no one is singing, no one is filming, and Maynard hardly addresses the crowd. It’s an oddly personal experience for being in a sold out arena. Tool puts on a show that makes you feel like you took a hallucinogen, and fans crave it.

I had a great experience myself at the show. It was my first time seeing Tool; I missed them in 2017 when they came to the Petersen Events Center. I’ve been a fan for years, and it was great to finally see them live.

I was also given the privilege to photograph the show, which is especially cool considering no one else is allowed to even glimpse at their phone. This was definitely the loudest show I’ve ever been to, and I’ve seen numerous rock and metal acts including Metallica.

The visuals were something I’ve never seen in a concert before. I was thoroughly impressed throughout the whole night. I would highly recommend anyone to attend one of their shows, even if you only know a couple of songs. You will not be disappointed.

# Star is born with Gerber Baby

by Bailey Ritchey

TikTok is a fun outlet for anyone to create his/her own videos using his/her own sounds and ideas. It has recently gained tremendous popularity and is one of the most popular media outlets for teenagers in 2019.

With over 898,000 followers and 33 million likes, Tyler Funke has earned the title of Popular Creator on TikTok. Tyler started to gain a following in March 2019.

Funke is most popular for a compilation video of him saying “Gerber Baby” in different voices. The original video now has millions of views. This video has become so popular that Tyler designed merchandise based off of this video.

The 18-year-old now gets several hundred thousand views, as well as tens of thousands likes on each of his TikTok videos.

There wasn’t much to the birth of the famous Gerber Baby video.

“I was on vacation in Florida in July of 2019 and it was late at night, like 3:00 am. I was delusional and was saying words that sounded funny together,” he said.

Despite his popularity, Funke said, “TikTok does not pay me. I get donations on live streams.”

Tyler said it’s always been a dream of his, but he never thought anything like this could happen.

“People in public recognize me here and there. I’ve gotten recognized at the airport and even at college.” said Funke, who attends Penn State Harrisburg and studies Psychology.

THE GRID		When do you start decorating?	What is at the top of your Christmas list?	What is your favorite Christmas movie?	What is the worst Christmas gift you have ever got?	What is your New Year resolution?
<b>Freshman Samy Rodibaugh</b>		I normally start decorating November 1st	<b>Pineapple Plush</b>	Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer 	<b>Coal</b>	<b>Start meditating</b>
<b>Sophomore Madeline Turner</b>		Weekend after Thanksgiving	<b>New pens!</b>	<b>Nightmare Before Christmas</b>	A speaker whose top volume was quieter than my phone.	<b>Stop trying to make resolutions.</b>
<b>Junior Emily Kubic</b>		<b>November 1st</b>	A dog	<b>Elf</b>	<b>Justice gift card</b>	<b>pass junior year</b>
<b>Senior Thomas Borgen</b>		<b>First week of December</b>	<b>Money</b> 	<b>Christmas Vacation</b>	<b>Literal coal</b> 	<b>To solve the teen vaping crisis.</b>
<b>Faculty Mr. Connelly</b>		I start decorating as late as possible and put the stuff away as soon as I am allowed.	Love and compassion instead of hatred and division.	“A Christmas Story” with Ralphie shooting his eye out.	I have the mechanical ability of the average floor tile, so the Craftsman 450-piece tool set did not get put to use.	<b>To be more thankful for my blessings and to be more deliberate in helping others.</b>

LAS CRUCES, N.M. — An employee of a New Mexico Subway sandwich shop is facing charges after police say she robbed the place to teach another worker “a lesson.”

Lorena Ariana Marin, 22, and her alleged accomplice Angelo Rey Espinosa, 19, were arrested Monday night following reports of a robbery in Las Cruces, New Mexico, the Las Cruces Sun-News reports.

Police said Espinosa allegedly stood by while Marin verbally and physically threatened the employees after hopping behind the counter. They ushered the employees to the back of the store, but one employee ran to her car and got away.

Marin told officers she committed the robbery “to teach one of the employees a lesson about what could happen late at night in that part of town.” Marin and Espinosa are facing robbery charges.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Authorities say an irate woman pointed a gun at fast food workers because they gave her ketchup instead of jelly.

Asia Vester, 20, was arrested Tuesday and charged with aggravated assault and unlawful possession of a weapon, news outlets are reporting.

According to a Memphis police affidavit, Vester was in the drive-thru line of a McDonald’s last week when she received her food and realized her request for jelly was either forgotten or unheeded. She instead received ketchup.

Words were exchanged with several employees. Vester was accused of pulling out a gun and pointing it at employees.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Visitors to the Tennessee Aquarium may be shocked to learn that an electric eel named Miguel Wattson is lighting up a Christmas tree.

A special system connected to Miguel’s tank enables his shocks to power strands of lights on a nearby tree, according to a news release.

Miguel releases low-voltage blips of electricity when he is trying to find food, aquarist Kimberly Hurt said. That translates to a rapid, dim blinking of the Christmas lights. When he is eating or excited he emits higher voltage shocks which cause bigger flashes.

A video posted shows Miguel shaking in his tank as lights on the nearby tree sputter on and off.

The aquarium hopes the Christmas tree will spark love and appreciation for the unusual freshwater fish.

PRESCOTT VALLEY, Ariz. -- An Arizona man’s emotional support animal is creating quite a buzz.

David Keller thinks the application process to register an emotional support animal is too easy — so he tried registering a swarm of bees as his service pet.

It worked. “A lot of people thought it was hilarious and a lot of people were getting upset,” Keller said. He recently went

# WEIRD NEWS

on a website called USAServiceDogRegistration.com and successfully uploaded a random photo of a beehive as a service animal “to bring awareness to the issue that anyone could do this,” he said.

Keller was inspired to go through with the registration after seeing a service dog that was visibly untrained.

“I could very easily tell that it was not a service animal because it was pulling the owner to the parking lot,” says Keller. “I was thinking that it’s just too easy to get these animals to be service animals.”

MCCOMB, Miss. — People have added street work to their Christmas lists after they said the city left them with a gaping pothole, and now they’re using holiday cheer to bring some attention to it.

The pothole has been serving as the base for a makeshift Christmas tree. John Drummond said the tree — made of a metal rod sitting inside of a traffic cone — originally was supposed to be a deterrent for the cone, which had been knocked all over the neighborhood after city workers dug up the street and placed it over the pothole.

“For a couple of days, the cone

stayed in the hole. Then, people starting knocking it everywhere,” Drummond said. “I saw a Christmas tree on TV and said ‘let’s put one of those out there in that cone and everybody can like it and not hit the pothole.’”

From there, the makeshift tree took on a life of its own. Neighbors would come and add silver, red and gold pine cone ornaments. Others added silver and gold garland to the metal tree. Cyrena Austin added lights for the ultimate festive feel.

Fox News reached out to the mayor’s office to inquire about when the pothole would be fixed. The mayor’s office deferred to the city’s streets department, which did not respond.

CAPE COD, Mass. -- An 11-year-old Maine girl threw a message in a bottle into the water and it was found 36 years later by a man walking the Cape Cod beach in Massachusetts.

Joshua Mendes, 42, said he was beach combing two days before Thanksgiving when he found the glass Coke bottle mostly buried in the sand.

The bottle contained a message signed by an 11-year-old Jonesport, Maine, girl named Jenny Brown. The note was dated May 14, 1983.

Mendes attempted to locate Brown, but the only information given in the note was a post office box.

The Bangor Daily News shared the saga on Facebook, where it came to the attention of Kathy Marie Brown, who confirmed Jenny is her sister and still lives in Jonesport.

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## Happy Holidays Hunt

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| A CHRISTMAS CAROL  | FIRST NOEL           | LITTLE DRUMMER BOY |
| AWAY IN A MANGER   | HOLLY AND THE IVY    | O HOLY NIGHT       |
| CAROL OF THE BELLS | HOME ALONE           | POLAR EXPRESS      |
| CHRISTMAS VACATION | ITS A WONDERFUL LIFE | SANTA CLAUSE       |
| DECK THE HALLS     | JINGLE BELLS         | SILENT NIGHT       |
| ELF                | JOY TO THE WORLD     |                    |

# Team's hard work produces rewarding season

by Ashley Llaneza

The girls' volleyball team finished off a successful season with a 12-6 record. The girls' hard work paid off throughout the season, and they were able to make it to the second round of the WPIAL playoffs before losing against Canon-McMillan.

The home playoff game against Penn Trafford was one highlight from the season. The atmosphere at the game was great, and the girls won 3-0.

"We haven't had a home playoff game in a long time, and winning a home playoff game was good," head coach Paul Stadelman said.

The atmosphere of the game and the girls' preparation were key factors in making the game a success. In Stadelman's opinion, the game against Penn Trafford was one of the best matches that the team played all season.

Another significant game for the team was the home game against Knoch.

The Knoch game was also alumni night, so there were players in the stands who played for SAVB in the past, in addition to the fans. The game was also a dig pink event to benefit breast cancer research. Although this game was only an exhibition match, it was a significant one for the team.

"It was sort of everything encompassed all in to one, and we played very well. It was a nice environment," Stadelman said.

From Stadelman's perspective, the most rewarding part of the season was seeing how the team developed throughout the season.

"It was rewarding to see a group of girls who started out just as a bunch of individual players really start to work together as a team. I think it was rewarding for me as a coach to see their development on the court in skill and just a lot of their comradery on the court with each other and their togetherness with the way they played," he said.

At the end of the season, sophomores Mia Schubert and Tia Bozzo were recognized for their exceptional play by making first team all section.

In addition to Schubert and Bozzo, sophomore Addie Kania and junior Emily Peterson were elected as honorable mention for the Big 56 Girls Volleyball Team.

Peterson thought the season was very successful and rewarding.



Addie Kania spikes a ball against Penn-Trafford (Tom Rekowski)

"Seeing our growth, especially since we have such a young team, was probably the most rewarding aspect of the season. I had high hopes going in, and I feel that we exceeded a lot of expectations," Peterson said.

Although the girls lost 3-0 against Canon-McMillan in the second round of the WPIAL playoffs, they exceeded Stadelman's expectations for the season.

"I think anytime at the end of the season when you lose in the WPIAL quarterfinals, you're probably a little bit disappointed, but it's rewarding seeing this group of girls come together, work hard, and really step up and play whoever we were up against and it did not change our work ethic," he said.

## Titans start slow, finish with playoff berth



Senior RB Jake Miller (Kevin Ritchey)

by Dominic DiTommasso

For the Shaler Area football team, it looked like another season was down and out after the first month, but things turned around pretty quickly.

The Titans began the year losing 34-27 at home to New Castle. They then got a 23-6 win over Kiski Area, but then lost two straight to Hampton, 31-28, and Bethel Park, 31-0.

After the 1-3 start, Shaler ended up going 4-6 and making the WPIAL playoffs for the second consecutive season which is saying something for the program.

Consider that starting with the 2012 season, Shaler

Area's record each year was 0-9, 0-9, 0-9, 2-8, 0-10, and 0-10. That does not mean that the team was satisfied with this season.

"We had higher expectations," head coach Jim Ryan said, "but there were a lot of positives that came out of this season. A lot of progress was made."

Following starting 1-3, Shaler beat Franklin Regional 28-17 on our Homecoming, lost at Mars 34-20, beat Armstrong 46-13 at home. They then lost 43-14 to Penn Hills at home and at North Hills 19-12. They needed to beat Fox Chapel to have a chance to make the playoffs which they did, 27-20.

In the first-round playoff game against the number two-ranked Gateway Gators, the game was tied 14-14 in the second half, but Gateway blew open the game and ended up winning 35-21.

"We had to minimize our turnovers [in that game]. Especially given their tailback, you can't give them those turnovers," Ryan said. "We were, again, on bad field position, you can't play on a short field. Stuff like that will always hurt you against an opponent like Gateway."

Following the playoff game, it was announced that both Jake Miller (running back/inside linebacker) and Joey Impavido (wide receiver) were voted to first team of the Big 56 Athletic Conference.

Miller finished the season with 151 carries for 854 yards and 12 touchdowns, while catching 17 balls for 277 yards and three touchdowns. For

his part, Impavido had 53 receptions for 739 yards and nine touchdowns.

Nevin Summerfield and Brandon Schweinberg (offensive tackle), Zach Valentine (defensive tackle), Ryan Thibault (defensive end), Shayn Skelley (defensive back), Darin Mizgorski (quarterback), and Blake Kucharski (wide receiver) were all selected for second team.

Mizgorski finished the season 133-247, 1,747 yards and 13 touchdowns. He carried the ball 88 times for 279 yards. Kucharski had 23 catches for 322 yards and a touchdown.

## Not better than LeBron from page 2

back when James' Lakers visited Dončić's Mavericks in Dallas? At the end of the game, with his Mavericks up one with under two to play, Dončić gets hit upside the head going for a loose ball.

And Dončić just checked out of the rest of the game.

His Mavericks ended up losing by nine in overtime at home, and from the moment he got hit, he went 1-5 from the field with a turnover. Dončić just doesn't have killer instinct a Jordan or a Bird had or a James can have.

I continually try to comprehend what I saw a few weeks ago when Dončić, in his building, got blown out by the Clippers.

Following that 114-99 stomping, in which Dončić went 4-14 from the field and 0-8 from three, Dončić did the unthinkable: he left the locker room before the media could get to him.

If you're a "superstar", you don't run from the media following a loss.

Before a game against Golden State a few weeks ago, ESPN had the audacity to put a graphic on the screen suggesting that Dončić is better in his second season than James was in his. I just sat and shook my head. There is no, no way that Luka Dončić is better at the age of 20 than James was, averaging 27, 7, and 7.

Do not get swept up in the media race to proclaim Dončić the next all-time great. If you do, you might get trampled.

# Seven new members inducted to Athletic Hall of Fame

(biography info compiled by Mr. Mark Connelly)

## Tom Gralewski

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

## Brian Junker

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

## Abi May

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

## Peggy Ruefle

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



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

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

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

## Rick Saulle

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

## Bryan Smetanka

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

## Steve Truban

Steve earned four varsity letters in both football and basketball while playing at Etna High School. His greatest impact on athletics, however, came as a school board director when Etna, Millvale, Reserve, and Shaler merged and formed the Shaler Area School District.

# New laws finally gets athletes what they deserve: money

by Dominic DiTommaso

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

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

This is good.

But not good enough.

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

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

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

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

And yet, Sweeney would be nothing without

all his players, all his stars, who play for him. The players are "forced" to play for him, for three years, and that in itself is unconstitutional. But the point is, Sweeney's players are getting nothing while he gets everything, yet he would be nothing if it wasn't for Trevor Lawrence and Travis Etienne and Justyn Ross and all his athletes.

I say that's wrong.

Now, I often sit back and wonder how valuable these athletes actually are. For instance: how much is Trevor Lawrence worth to Clemson right now? They just won the National Championship last year! I'd say that's pretty valuable! Was he worth five million dollars to Clemson last year? This year?

How about more than nine million dollars like his coach Dabo Swinney? Yep. I believe he's worth it.

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

College sports love to sell to their donors and boosters and alums, and even current students, that this amateur athlete or that amateur athlete sat in the very same seat that you once sat in, or currently sit in. They used to sit in the very same classroom you used to sit in, or currently sit in, at Alabama or Georgia or Ohio State.

Schools are essentially "using" these players to enhance their program and bank account. I bet USC loves saying "Hey, Reggie Bush once sat in that very seat!". And Bush gets... nothing.

What a joke.

And not a funny one.

How about this: before the 2017 NFL Draft, the University of Michigan's TE Jake Butt tore his ACL in the bowl game, and what happened? He plummeted in the Draft all the way to the first pick of the fifth round. I liked Jake as a player, and he easily had a second-round grade on him. With his injury, he lost a lot of money.

That's a Wolverine-sized bite that hurts.

So these college athletes are risking everything for nothing.

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

What if a school could get their donors, their boosters,

to pay whatever they wanted for a top recruit?

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

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

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

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

Maybe now, someone will listen.

**The fact that college players, specifically college football players, have to risk their entire professional careers, for three years, and get nothing for it but scholarship money is un-American.**

# D'Agostino balances life as teacher, coach & dad

by Michaela Brining

Mr. Drew D'Agostino is more than just a Phys. Ed. teacher at Shaler Area High School. He is a loving father, a husband, a coach, an art collector, a fisherman, a car enthusiast, a Jack Black look alike, an intellectual and an overall great guy.

Growing up, D'Agostino was very involved in many activities. He played the saxophone, studied hard and got involved in wrestling. In the high school, D'Agostino was an All-American athlete and was recruited by Slippery Rock University.

Originally D'Agostino is from New York. He grew up on the border of New York and New Jersey, which explains his unique accent. After high school, he moved to Pennsylvania to attend Slippery Rock.

After attending Slippery Rock, he started working at Shaler Area in 1992 as a wrestling coach and was hired in 1998 as a teacher.

Prior to his employment here, D'Agostino was a Division One wrestling coach at Central Connecticut State University. When his father became ill, he moved back to Pennsylvania to finish his degree.

When D'Agostino moved here, he had many interesting jobs while still trying to finish school.

"I was a bike messenger. They don't have those anymore. I'd pick up packages and bring them from one company to another. I didn't have a driver's license until I was 30, so I rode my bike everywhere," he said.

After years of working at many different places, D'Agostino was eventually hired as a wrestling coach at Shaler Area.

"I was a freshman at Slippery Rock in '85. I busted my neck wrestling my senior year, so I went back to Jersey for an MRI and found out I had a break in my neck. That's what ended my wrestling career and why I started coaching. I was in New York for a year then

I went to Connecticut for two years," D'Agostino said.

While at college, D'Agostino took a long time figuring out what path he wanted to take.

"I started off majoring in Pre-Med/Sport Medicine. It took too much time and I just wasn't able to do all of it with wrestling. Also, I was an art major for a year, but I just didn't have any, you know, *talent*. I just wasn't the best student, the first time. The second time I graduated with a 4.0."

Due to neck injuries, D'Agostino eventually left Slippery Rock before finishing his degree. However, he returned multiple years later and decided to acquire a degree in Education. His father was a teacher, along with many of his other relatives, so he figured education would be the degree to pursue.

While D'Agostino attended class at Slippery Rock, he was also hired as the wrestling coach at Shaler. Once he finished his degree, he was eventually hired as a physical education teacher. However, after years of coaching for the district, D'Agostino decided it was time to stop this year.

"I started having some issues with my neck again this summer and I thought I was going to have to get surgery. Since wrestling is a hands on sport, I didn't know if I could keep doing it with coaching. I'm also the head coach of the Pennsylvania State Wrestling team and I travel a lot through that, especially during the summer. I'm



Mr. Drew D'Agostino

trying to do some international stuff as well. It just became too much."

Although D'Agostino's coaching career might have ended at SA, he still keeps busy with many activities such as camping, fishing, kayaking, collecting art and fancy cars and going to his camp in Pymatuning. However, he devotes most of his time to what is most important to him: being a good father.

"I've been married to my wife for 22 years and I have two sons, AJ and Andrew who both went to Shaler... I don't believe in daughters. Don't put that down. But I do have a canine daughter, Rosy. My dog is trained in jujitsu," he said.

Many teachers never have the opportunity to teach their own kids, but D'Agostino had both of his sons in class.

"It was cool having my sons in

class. It wasn't weird at all. I would mess with my son AJ, who has autism, by calling him Anthony everyday and he would always think it was funny."

D'Agostino has enjoyed his time working at Shaler Area, saying he appreciates how connected the school is and how amazing all of the students are. One of D'Agostino's biggest accomplishments is being a "semi-good teacher at Shaler", however, D'Agostino believes the relationship with his family is what he is most proud of.

"My biggest accomplishment in life is my sons," he said. "I'm proud of my boys. Having a healthy relationship with my wife for the past twenty two years is a good accomplishment. And, like I said, being a semi-successful coach and educator here is also one of my biggest accomplishments."

## Blood drive collects enough to potentially save 300 lives

by Julia Falgione

Shaler Area High School's semi-annual blood drive was held in November. The blood drive is organized by physical education teacher Ms. Marci Jackley.

This year, the school was able to donate 100 units of blood which is a pretty typical number according to Jackley.

There were 120 students who applied to donate, but about 20 students were turned away for things such as iron deficiency.

Organizing the blood drive is a very time consuming task, but Jackley still continues to do it twice a year.

"I enjoy giving back. This is my small way that I can encourage students to make a difference," Jackley said.

Every year, Vitalant, the company who also runs the blood drive, gives everyone who donates or tries to donate a present of some sort. In years past, there were t-shirts given out. This year Vitalant gave everyone a metal straw that came with a cleaner and pouch to put them both in.

When people try to donate blood they need to make sure that they treat their body right before the donation to try to lower the probability that they will be deferred. Someone could possibly be deferred, not be able to give blood, if he/



Anna Kirasic and Blake Kucharski at the blood drive

she is not over 110 pounds, has low iron levels, is sick, takes certain medicines like accutane, or got a tattoo in the last year.

"The biggest thing is for the potential donors is to prepare their bodies for the donation. Good breakfast the day of, keeping hydrated throughout the evening before and day of the donation are really important for a good donation," Jackley said.

While there are many harmless stories when students prepare their body for donating blood, there are the occasional horror stories when students do not prepare.

"During the last blood drive, I was fine until I got slightly light headed and they let me rest. I got up too quick and everything went black and I started gagging. They sat me in a chair where a kid had just thrown up, so the smell just made it worse. I saved three lives, but I almost died," senior Annie Girton said.

By donating just one pint of blood, a student could potentially be saving up to three lives.

"You could be helping an infant, a burn victim, or a cancer patient survive one more day. Not to mention, you may be the one who needs blood products someday, you may have a family member that needs blood products," Jackley said.

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Get an inside look at La Roche by meeting current students and campus staff, touring campus and having dinner in the dining hall. Learn more about campus life, and how to apply and pay for college.



## COMMUNITY FINANCIAL AID NIGHT Tuesday, Feb. 25 | 6 p.m.

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# Albums of the year and decade

**Max:**

**Album of The Year: “Infest the Rats’ Nest” by King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard**

“Infest the Rats’ Nest” is an album you need to hear. This is a thrash metal record coming from a band who changes their genre and style on every album. King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard is made up of 7 members, which constitutes a huge and unique sound. This album hits on topics of global warming and pollution, as well as the divide between the rich and poor, which are classic themes throughout the genre. If you’re a fan of old school thrash, you’ll love this record.



**Album of The Decade: “Yeezus” by Kanye West (2013)**

“Yeezus” is my favorite Kanye project of all time, and my favorite album of the decade. When I first heard this record, I was absolutely blown away; I’d never heard a rap album like it. The production and instrumentals are heavily inspired by industrial and electronic music, which creates for a super unique soundscape. Kanye lyrically touches on every emotion, so you can listen to this album no matter how you’re feeling. It’s a polarizing record; you either love it or hate it. Either way, you can’t discredit the genius that went into it. “Yeezus” is 100% worth your listen.



**Ashley:**

**Album of The Year: “Hollywood’s Bleeding” by Post Malone**

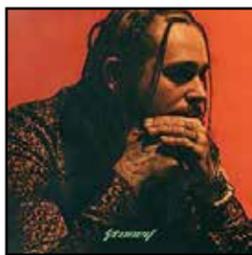
Although some may consider it to be mainstream, “Hollywood’s Bleeding” is an album that everyone should listen to. On this album, there is a song for every person. The variety of sounds

is very impressive and makes you want to keep it on repeat. Whether you’re feeling down in the dumps or ready to jam out with your friends, you’ll be able to find a song on this album that corresponds with your mood. Post Malone is a very significant artist in our generation. I have been a huge fan of him for some time now and I highly recommend that each and every person listens to this album from start to finish. Trust me, if my grandma enjoys listening to this album, you will too.



**Album of The Decade: “Stoney” by Post Malone (2016)**

“Stoney”, Austin Richard Post’s debut album, was released on December 9, 2016. After I heard the song “Leave”, I instantly fell in love. I have been listening to this album through since it came out and I don’t plan on stopping anytime soon.



I never get tired of listening to the songs on this album. I especially love this album because of its versatility and all of the different sounds on each track. Some of Malone’s biggest hits, such as “White Iverson”, “Congratulations”, “I Fall Apart”, and “Go Flex”, are included on this album.

Being his first album, it is extremely impressive that Malone was able to record a variety of songs that make you want to keep listening forever. If you haven’t listened to this album from beginning to end, I wish nothing more than for you to plug in your headphones and prepare to hear a work of art.

**Bailey:**

**Album of the year: “Hollywood’s**

**Bleeding” by Post Malone**

Everything leading up to the album made it even better. His last album; “Beerbongs and Bentleys”, released at the end of April 2018, made this album long overdue for Post Malone fans. The 17 songs on the album each compliment the other songs unlike most artists whose music all sound the same. This diversity in the album gives the listener a range of music from sad to happy and lyrical to rock. “Hollywood’s Bleeding” touches every point an album should and proves my point as to why it is the best album of the year.



**Album of the decade: “Homecoming” by Beyonce (2019)**

Regardless if you like Beyonce, everyone knows the lyrics to her songs and who she is. She performed this at coachella in 2018, then released the album in 2019. This album brings back all of the favorites and revamps them by adding marching band, hence the title, “Homecoming”. This album really is an album of the decade because it is from the last ten years. Beyonce is iconic and this album is by far one of her best and one of the decades best.



**Michaela:**

**Album of the year: “Nothing Happens” by Wallows**

The band, Wallows released their first official album, “Nothing Happens” in March of 2019. Prior



to this release, the band only had an EP titled “Spring” and a collection of semi-successful singles. However, this album posed as a complete game changer, bringing more mainstream attention to the beauty which is their music. The album is considered indie-rock after the bands break from their record label in 2017, however I would describe the genre as soft pop punk. I beg you to first listen to “Are You Bored Yet?” featuring Clairo and then listen to the rest of the album in chronological order. There are some truly beautiful pieces on there. I guarantee you’ll find at least one song that you can vibe with.

**Album of the Decade: “21” by Adele (2011)**

It can be easy to forget this album exists, given it came out way back in 2011. However, this album has singlehandedly created a nation of strong women who feel empowered, even when their relationships don’t work out. Adele is known for being “that girl that sings breakup songs” but she is so much more than that. The depth, power, strength and emotion her voice contains is legendary. In my opinion, she is the Whitney Houston of our generation. Twenty years from now, we are going to tell our kids about our crazy teenage years, play this album and tell them that THIS was the music we grew up listening to. Iconic.



**James:**

**Album of the Year: “Morbid Stuff” by PUP**

Although PUP stands for “Pathetic Use of Potential”, the band is using every ounce of its potential it has on this al-



## New Kanye album gives fans both good and bad

by James Engel

Contrary to popular belief, Kanye West does have the capability to actually release an album. It took more than a year for West to deliver on the album he promised his fans, but at long last, on October 25, Kanye gave us “Jesus Is King”. It is an interesting, but a seemingly unfinished album. There are definitely some songs to skip, but I will highlight some of the great tracks on West’s latest effort.

“Selah” is the first true track on the album. The drums are wonderful and epic in scale. Kanye throws out some biblical lyrics to fit his Christian themes. It reminds me of some of the gospel-esque music of his 2016 album, “The Life of Pablo”. It is a great song, that will surely go down as a Kanye classic.

The next track, “Follow God”, reminds me of the song “Yikes” from West’s last effort, “ye”. It has a classic Kanye soul sample, with lyrics about an argument with his father. It is an enjoyable and entertaining song that highlights Kanye’s lyrical and production talents.

“Closed On Sunday” is one of the oddest songs that I’ve ever heard. Kanye is singing about the fast-food chain, Chick-fil-a. Listening to Kanye sing about chicken sandwiches and lemonade makes the first half of the song slightly cringe-inducing, but the second half is an awesome listening experience. The more I listen to it, the more I begin to enjoy it.



Kanye’s most heartfelt song on the album is “God Is”. It is soft, meaningful, and actually shows some of the supposed love West has for God. It has beautiful samples and lyrics and is one of the best songs West has ever written. Church youth groups are going to go crazy for this one.

“Use This Gospel” is the last full song on the album, and samples a car ring-ing because the keys are still in the ignition, among other cool things. The track features verses from Clipse, a group consisting of brothers, Pusha T and No Malice.

Each verse is excellent, albeit quite short. Kanye’s chorus instructs us to use the gospel for protection and to put faith in God. The last minute of the song consists of a wonderful saxophone solo from Kenny G, which is followed by a return of the beat with heavier drums. It is an amazing song that anyone, Kanye fan or not, should listen to.

“Jesus Is King” is different but also the same. It incorporates elements of old Kanye and new Kanye to great effect. That being said, there are definitely some flops on this album like “On God”, “Water”, and “Hands On”.

There are some songs that have potential, but are simply short, unfinished, or lack content like “Every Hour” and “Jesus Is Lord”. The album is good, but it’s not great. The good songs will go down as classics in Kanye’s discography, but there are too many flops to laud it, the way I do other Ye efforts. Overall, I’d rate “Jesus Is King” 6.5/10, pretty good.

# Haunted Pittsburgh shares city's haunts and history

by Ashley Llana

Have you ever wondered about the history behind some of Pittsburgh's oldest buildings? If you're interested in learning more about the chilling secrets behind our city's most dated landmarks, haunted Pittsburgh will not only appeal to your inner history nerd, but it will also give you trouble sleeping at night.

Haunted Pittsburgh is a tour held in the heart of Pittsburgh from May to early November. The tour goes all around the city, starting at the Richard Caligiuri statue by the City County building and ending at the old morgue, which is currently the County Health Department.

The Haunted Pittsburgh tour uses a different approach to informing yinzers of the history behind their city. While the tour is intended to leave the audience feeling somewhat frightened, the greater purpose is to leave them feeling educated. Haunted Pittsburgh prides itself in providing crowds with true stories about Western Pennsylvania's creepy history.

"We're not ghost hunters; we just tell stories. Our tour started when the fellow who owns the tour took tours all over the country with his wife and thought he could do better. He spent decades pouring through old newspapers in the library and old magazines and books and interviewing people to get our stories," tour guide Haydn Thomas said.

The tour is a hot commodity during the weeks that surround Halloween. Crowds tend to vary from 20 to 70 people per tour. During the weeks leading up to and following Halloween, crowds reach their upper limit of about 50-70 per tour.

Thomas takes pride in his storytelling techniques and thoroughly enjoys entertaining the tour crowds.

"Every crowd has its own personality. You can tell right away; if they laugh at the first joke then they are going to laugh and react to everything. They're going to be with you. Sometimes, they just stand there because they don't want to be the one who's laughing. The whole night it's like pulling teeth trying to get a reaction from people," Thomas said.

Thomas, who is now 69 years old, has been working for Haunted Pittsburgh for seven years. He was born and raised in Pittsburgh, and still currently resides in Munhall. Prior to touring with Haunted Pittsburgh, Thomas was a devoted worker at an



Haydn Thomas from Haunted Pittsburgh

automotive plant and was a member of the UAW. Even though he attended college and got his degree, Thomas took this job because he liked having a union on his side.

Thomas loves nothing more than touring large crowds and entertaining them with his impeccable storytelling abilities. After retiring from the UAW, he was inspired by his daughters to become a storyteller.

"It took me 60 years to figure out what I was good at- turns out it's telling ghost stories," Thomas said.

Thomas has travelled to many different countries, including Germany and the United Arab Emirates, where he has experienced a variety of tours. One tour that specifically inspired him to pursue his storytelling career was the "Hitler's Munich" tour in Munich, Germany.

Surprisingly, Thomas does not particularly believe in ghosts. While he has had some strange experiences at places such as the Carnegie Library of

Homestead and S.W. Randall Toyes and Giftes located downtown, he has not been one to see ghosts throughout his life. He just tells the stories as he is supposed to, and that doesn't have much of an effect on his personal beliefs.

"I never much thought one way or another about ghosts. I just thought it would be cool to be a tour guide," Thomas said.

However, according to Thomas, many people who tour with him tell him afterwards about their personal experiences with ghosts. Although he cannot personally relate with most of the people, he said that he can sense the fear in their eyes when they recall their experience.

Although Thomas himself does not feel a certain way about ghosts, he did not hesitate to give his opinion on the most haunted location in our beloved city.

"We say it's the old jail. Personally I think it's Randall's," Thomas said.

After hearing of multiple ghost encounters at Randall's, Thomas talked about his own experience. He was on the third floor asking one of the employees if she had ever seen anything. She told him that for a week when she came in, a particular book was on the floor, although she had always made sure that it was on the shelf before she left the night prior. When she was telling her story, out of the corner of his eye, Thomas saw a shadow from behind the bookcase where that book was located. He described it as "a spreading ink blot". However, when he turned to look, the shadow disappeared. To this day, Thomas is unsure if what he saw was just a smudge on his glasses rather than a ghost. However, he finds it rather peculiar that he experienced such a thing while he was having a conversation about that specific topic.

The Haunted Pittsburgh Tour is an experience that is sure to make you sleep with one eye open and leave your brain feeling crowded with new historical information.

Haunted Pittsburgh also has another tour called the Long Lost Pittsburgh History Tour which is very similar to the ghost tour besides the fact that it focuses more on historical facts.

"The Long Lost Pittsburgh History Tour has great stories from Pittsburgh's history. I love that tour, but it's a much harder sell to get people to take a history tour than it is to get them to take a ghost tour."

## Orsini brings variety of experiences to classroom

by Michaela Brining

Located in room 220 is a man. And that man is Dante Orsini. I'm sure many of you are wondering, "Who is that? What does he teach? And what is his favorite dipping sauce?"

Mr. Orsini is an Algebra and Geometry teacher. He teaches mainly freshmen and sophomores. Many of the upperclassmen only know Mr. Orsini as the "man who now occupies Mr. Lamphere's old room."

That room was, in fact, Mr. Orsini's first, despite the staples Mr. Lamphere permanently stabbed in the wall. Two years ago, Orsini left the halls of Shaler Area on a sabbatical to pursue his education and earn a Master's in Education Administration at Duquesne University.

His most recent degree allows him to become a principal, administrator and curriculum writer. After acquiring this, Mr. Orsini arrived back at Shaler and taught one year at the middle school.

Now he's back at the high school. A lot of the seniors missed the

opportunity to have Mr. Orsini as a teacher. To quote the song, "Cotton Eyed Joe", "where did he come from, and where did he go?"

Despite seeming like a new member of the Shaler Area staff, Mr. Orsini is in his 12th year at Shaler Area. He graduated with a degree in Secondary Math Education from Duquesne.

Prior to becoming a teacher Mr Orsini had a variety of interesting jobs at a variety of interesting places.

"I've worked at every place on McKnight Road," he said. "American Eagle, Chuck E Cheese, Abrocrombe and Fitch, Pier One Imports- honestly, everywhere on McKnight."

When deciding a career path, Orsini said his father was the one that encouraged him to go into teaching.

"I didn't want to be a teacher," Mr. Orsini admitted. "My dad told me it was a good job and that there was a lot of math positions open, so I went to school to get a job... It's afforded me some interesting opportunities throughout my life."

As a student, Mr Orsini attended

Shaler and was involved in many activities such as volleyball and wrestling. He even participated in a fall play and spring musical. During his college days, he continued his interest in sports, playing in intramural programs for fun, as well as becoming a Resident Assistant. Today, Mr Orsini still continues with many of the hobbies he pursued when he was in high school.

"I still play volleyball, I work out, hike, camp," Orsini said. "I like to build computers, play video games and program."

Orsini also enjoys spending his free time playing his favorite game called 'Dark Souls', where the players get to "run around with a sword and kill things," as well as jamming to music.

"I like all music that's good," he said. "If it takes talent to make it, I will probably like it. If it's mumble rap, I probably will not." His taste in music changes with the seasons. Currently he's bringing out acoustic covers for the fall.

In addition to Orsini's wide range

of interests and hobbies, he also has many interesting qualities.

"Probably my most interesting fact about myself," Orsini said, "is that I got to do my student teaching in Ireland." He noted it was one of the best experiences he has had.

"I don't have a favorite movie, but I do have a favorite book called, 'Brave New World,'" he said "Let's see my favorite animal is by far a manatee".

Now, the question, I know you've all been waiting for. What is Mr. Orsini's favorite dip?

"Obviously salsa and guac! You can put salsa and guac on everything and anything and it makes it better," he said.

Orsini said he wishes he could have a super power. However, he wouldn't want the typical, "super strength or telekinesis". He said something much more powerful and deep.

"It would be the ability to make young people value their future more. It's not your typical superpower, but no one seemed to be able to do it yet."

# Presentation exposes students to opportunities in trade unions

by James Engel

On November 25, Shaler Area High School hosted an event featuring trade union representatives offering apprenticeship opportunities. These events give students a chance to hear from local union leaders about the work that they do and what futures they can offer students.

Events like these are not only an opportunity for students to learn about a potential career in the future but for the trade unions to recruit and foster a new generation of young and talented workers. With several new building projects throughout the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, the trade unions require new members to boost their ranks and to help fill in the gaps that retiring members leave.

"I think the downturn in Tech Education and Industrial Arts led to a shortage of people in the trades, but the economy is doing well, and things have turned around. The money for infrastructure is there, now companies need tradespeople to do the jobs," Tech Ed teacher and Vice President of Shaler Area's teacher's union Brian Marree said.

Shaler Area began hosting these events through a connection with attorney and former

Allegheny County Councilman, Ed Kress. Kress was vital in the formation of these gatherings and the connection of students to the trades.

"Since we've had contact with Ed, we've done these trade presentations and each year it has grown some more," Marree said.

Presentations like these are important for students who do not seek to attend college following graduation. Trade Unions offer a stable income and steady work for students who are inclined towards hands-on labor.

"For those of us who aren't interested in college, that presentation was very helpful," senior Marcus Krotec said.

These events serve not only to foster interest in the unions but to provide students with a basic understanding of employment and the job

market. The presentations have helped some Shaler Area graduates in the past find success in the trades.

"I would say in the past we've probably had ten to twenty kids per year [join unions as apprentices], but even for the kids who don't want to get into it, it is important to hear about career expectations," Marree said.

**"The economy is doing well, and things have turned around. The money for infrastructure is there, now companies need tradespeople to do the jobs."**

**-- Mr. Brian Marree**

# Albums of the year and decade

from page 10

bum. The Canadian punk band sings about the anguish of relationships and the other woes of suburbia. The band's heavy and melodic rhythms combined with lead singer Stefan Babcock's unique voice and lyrics have given me some of the best music I have ever heard. For anyone who enjoys punk, check out "Morbid Stuff".

**Album of the Decade: "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" by Kanye West (2010)**

West released this album on November 22, 2010. In the nine years that have followed its release not a single album has topped the masterpiece that is "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy". This album bends genres, lyrics, instrumentals, and ultimately music, itself. This work of art is not only my favorite album of the decade, but my favorite album of all time. Say what you will about Kanye, but I don't know how much better music can get.



**Stephanie:**

**Album of the Year: "Pony" by Rex Orange County**

Alexander O'Connor, or Rex Orange County, has a sound like no other, and his newest work remains as evidence to this. Pony covers a wide range of sound, all being categorized under Alternative/Indie. O'Connor only being the age of 21, makes his sound more relatable to teens and young adults. Songs range anywhere from under a minute and a half, to over six minutes. The album does nothing less than tells the stories of the trials and tribulations of life as a young person. After waiting 2 years for a complete album, Pony was more than worth it.



**Album of the Decade: "Luv Is Rage 2" by Lil Uzi Vert (2017)**

Symerie Woods, or Lil Uzi Vert, has taken the world by storm in recent years. Not only as being a part of several internet memes, but in the form of his music. For being categorized under the very basic and vague, 'hip hop/rap' genre, Uzi has changed the name of today's rap scene. From songs like, "The Way Life Goes (feat. Oh Wonder)" which tells the story we all know too well, heartbreak. Uzi shares the advice and ultimate truth, time is the best healer. To songs like "Neon Guts (feat. Pharrell Williams)" which gives the album a break from emotion, giving the listener the ability to sing along with Uzi and Pharrell about their colorful and lavish lives. The album as a whole takes you on an emotional roller coaster, one to remember forever.



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