

The Oracle

Volume 42 Issue 3

Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

December 2015

Shaler Area honors Distinguished Alumnus

by Shamon O'Leary

Imagine working for the President of the United States. In 2004, then senior at Shaler Area Chris Watts probably couldn't either, but that was one of the many things he has done since leaving Shaler Area in 2004. He has exceeded his own expectations and managed to find himself as a well known member of the business world.

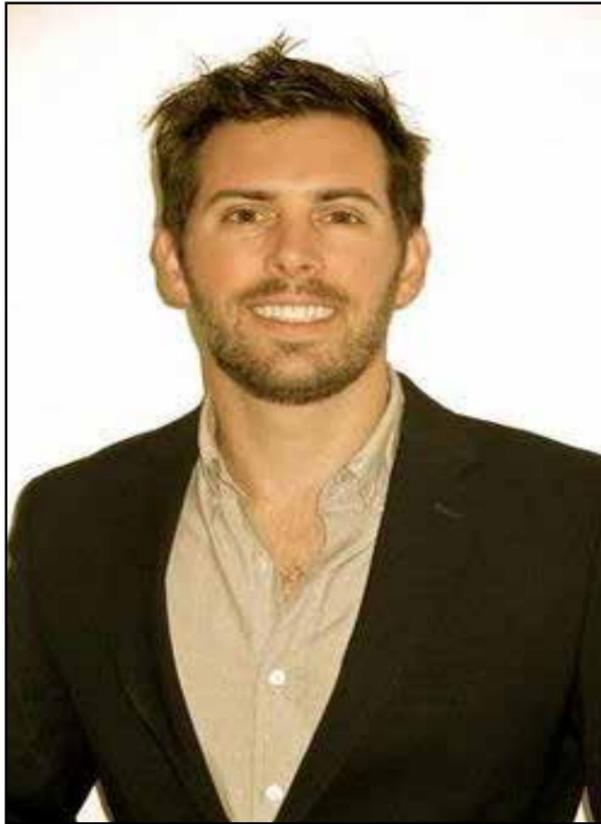
After graduating from Shaler Area in 2004, he attended the Carnegie Mellon University. From there, he went on to working for the President of the United States, establishing his own company, and becoming the Executive Director of the National Foundation on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition. For these reasons, he was recently given Shaler's 2015 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

While in high school, Watts had no idea what career he wanted to pursue. He thought about becoming a pediatrician or doctor until he realized Biology was not his strength, but Calculus and Computer Science were instead; so he set his mind on Engineering. Engineering was his major at CMU but even then he started to realize that wasn't what he really wanted to do. Finally, two years after he graduated he decided he wanted to do something associated with sports.

"When I wanted to transition from engineering to sports, I started blindly emailing anyone I knew that had anything to do with sports," Watts said.

From there, he went to George Washington University, which had a sports-focused program, to obtain his MBA. Shortly after, he became a liaison for partnerships to the country for sports opportunities on the President's council on fitness. Through this role, he was able to build a lot of relationships with media organizations and sports leagues and teams, but he was curious about what all he could accomplish there at first.

"At first I had relatively low expectations because I didn't know what it was. I understood it was the president's council but I didn't how much they



Christopher Watts, Shaler Area class of 2004

were really doing," he said.

Coincidentally, just weeks after he started, the First Lady decided on a childhood obesity and healthy lifestyle platform. On his second day, he had a meeting at the White House.

"That was when I thought 'wait, this is the President. I am actually doing this right now.' I was taken for a ride as soon as I started."

His job on the president's council really showed him the ropes of what working in the sports world was like. He had to learn how to run meetings and all of the other aspects that he was never familiar with as an engineer. Soon enough, he was building his own platform.

Watts helped establish the company 4POINT4,

becoming the Managing Director. 4POINT4 is a company that essentially gives back. When a company buys sportswear from 4POINT4, a certain percentage of the profit is given back to an organization of the customer's choice. The company was at first primarily focused in Washington, D.C. and New York, but it also had different relationships with the US Soccer Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Special Olympics. Organizations such as these bought sportswear from 4POINT4 for a special rate and advertised the company as one that truly does give back.

"The real idea behind 4POINT4 is we want all athletes to play for a cause," Watts said.

Because of this successful and charitable organization, Watts was named one of Forbes Magazine's "30 Under 30" for sports along with celebrities like Alex Morgan, Sidney Crosby, and Evgeni Malkin. This recognition seemed to be a wakeup call for Watts, who used this recognition as motivation.

"I kind of just laughed. I thought it was ridiculous. I saw the list and it was full of celebrity athletes and there were about 20 athletes and 10 professionals and I was one of those professionals. I knew I was doing something that was perceived as cool, but I didn't feel like we were successful yet and I still don't feel like we are yet," he said. "[The recognition] was a cool thing of course but it was also like, alright you gotta get your act in gear now."

Currently, Watts is the Executive Director of the National Foundation on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. This is a private organization that was founded by the government to support fitness and healthy activity across the country, and he is the one in charge of its building.

"My favorite part is I can set the plan and the vision to whatever I want it to be for this crazy, national organization that has huge potential and huge opportunity for corporate support and for support from

Cont. on page 8

Latin Honor Society gives back to the community

by Alyssa Wohlfarth

The Shaler Area Latin Honor Society has been set a goal this year to work more outside the school to have a positive impact on the local community.

"We're trying to get out to be more of a community-based organization. We're trying to help out in other places," senior Josh Bartosh, president of the Latin Honor Society, said.

In the past, the society focused mostly on the language, but the group felt that because it is an honor society, students should help the community more. LHS will continue to go to Penn State for a Latin convention where it meets with the other schools and competes in diverse activities, but it will now do more than that.

During the months of October and November, Latin Honor Society completed two service projects. On October 20, they painted pumpkins, which were then donated to the Children's Hospital.

Members did not get to deliver the pumpkins in person, but they did hear about how happy the children in the hospital were to get those decorated pumpkins.

"We like to do things just to give back and help those in need," Magistra Jessica Alexander, the co-sponsor of the Latin Honor Society, said.

On November 17, LHS made several fleece blankets. Those blankets were donated to Light of Life, a center which gives the homeless shelter and food. The fleece blankets will be handed out to the homeless to help them stay warm this winter.



Latin Honor Society making fleece blankets for the homeless and painting pumpkins for Children's Hospital



When asked about making the fleece blankets and how he felt about making and donating them Bartosh said, "It's very rewarding because you're helping somebody in need."

In December, the Latin Honor Society plans to spread some holiday joy by going to Hampton Fields to sing carols.

The Latin Honor Society hopes that all of these activities will help make the community a better and/or happier place.

"It's a good feeling to help others and give back to the community," freshman Latin student Cassie Kagle said.

OPINIONS

Christmas -- the most wonderful time of the year

by Shayla Nguyen

Christmas. The smell of pine trees. The twinkling lights. The feeling of holiday cheer. There really is no denying that Christmas is a magical time. I'm the type of person who starts looking forward to Christmas beginning December 26.

I listen to Christmas carols in the spring and by the time summer starts, I already know what I'm getting everyone for Christmas. For people like me, it is THE best time of the year hands down. Why? Well go ahead, get yourself a hot cup of cocoa and grab a seat by a warm fireplace, because I'm about to tell you.

For one thing, everything during Christmas is lit. Really. Houses adorned with bright, colorful lights and fun decorations. Inside the houses, you can find beautiful trees that light up the room with Christmas spirit. Walk into the city and you'll find yourself surrounded with even more twinkling lights. You can't find this at any other time of year.

Oh and don't forget the Christmas decorations. Almost everywhere is decked out for the holidays in tinsel, streamers, glitter, etc. Seriously, you can walk anywhere and see ornaments and decorations throughout. Wherever you go, you'll be hit with Christmas. Don't try to fight it. Just be thankful that you are blessed with the presence of all this holiday cheer.

We are not done there. We have Christmas lights and decorations so what more could there possibly be? We haven't even talked about the amazingly ugly Christmas sweaters. Only during Christmas can you get away with wearing a tacky, obnoxious sweater and be celebrated for it. It's absolutely fantastic.

I have to bring up the wonderful gift of Christmas music. You really can't get tired of it. You may say you do, but you know that deep down inside it gives you this warm and fuzzy feeling. Whenever I hear that familiar, magical sleigh bell sound, I immediately get excited whether Christmas is five days away or five months away. How can you resist Mariah Carey singing "All I Want For Christmas"? You can't and you won't.

Finally, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year because it's the time of giving and spending time with loved ones. Getting gifts is cool too, but it is so exciting to give gifts to your friends and family and seeing the look on their faces when they open them. It's priceless. That's the main reason why Christmas is truly the most wonderful time of the year.



The Angel Tree In the Activities Office

Technology is exacting a toll on kids of today

by Kayla Snyder

It's quite sad to look around at any public place and all you can see is an overload of electronic devices. What's even worse? Younger children are being given these devices now. It's safe to say that the younger generations are at the point of no return when it comes to technology.

Technology is a good thing, yes. But, technology, much like everything else in the world, has its flaws. It's a sad moment when some people can say with complete confidence that technology has ruined them or made them socially incompetent. My fear is that this statement is going to become a social norm for younger kids.

What happened? Parents look to their devices as method of keeping their child busy. With the endless supply of apps that can be downloaded faster than people can snap their fingers, it's almost impossible to find something that won't entertain your child.

Also, the media constantly emphasizes the use of technology. It isn't 'cool' if you don't have the new and up and coming technology. It feels like you have to buy the latest iPhone so that you will be able to compete at the same standards as someone else.

On top of that schools are becoming more technologically advanced which is causing exposure to electronics at a very young age for most children. Not only is the addition of technology killing social skills, it is making it very hard to become unattached and children have a very hard time functioning without some kind of electronic device.

Even in our school there is a clear disconnect between the generational differences. With the arrival of the iPads, this disconnect has become more prevalent. The majority of the upperclassmen deem these devices as unnecessary and useless whereas the underclassmen praise the electronics and would not give

them up if given the opportunity.

Growing up, I do remember the gradual increase of technology but it seems as if in the past ten years, the boom has increased exponentially. Along with that, I also remember when I got my first cell phone and the reason why. The reason was not to entertain myself, it was for emergency purposes. Nowadays, children are getting expensive smartphones just for the "fun of it." That is not okay.

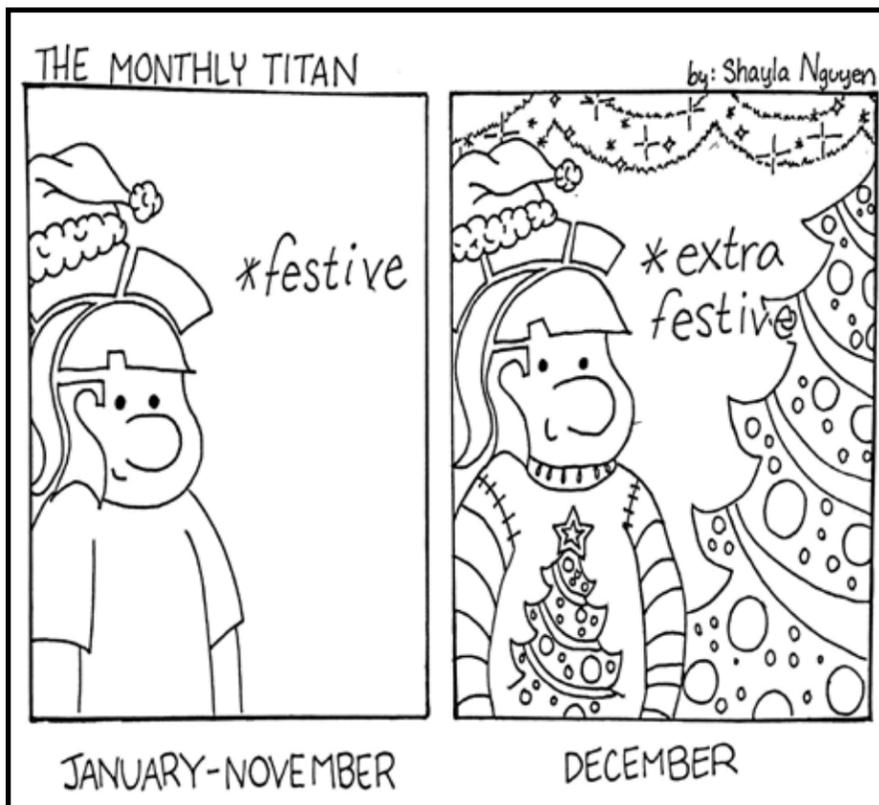
It's no surprise that the world is becoming more technologically advanced, but the problem is the generations below us are going to develop some kind of technology dependency if they haven't already and something about that is just wrong.

It's hard to judge who's at fault. Is it the parents? Are they just trying to enjoy their life without all the responsibilities that come along with having children? Or is it that technology has been praised by the media so much in the past couple of years that seeing a 4-year-old play on an iPad has become this generational social norm? My guess would be the latter.

Some will argue that technology doesn't hurt, it only helps. On the opposite side, some will argue that technology hurts and doesn't help whatsoever. It seems like the older generations tend to argue the negative sides of technology.

The fact in the matter is if you choose to ignore these advancements, you will be left behind. But are those advancements worth the price of slowly eroding social skills and borderline addiction to devices?

An editorial in the New York Times titled, "The Kids Are Not All Right" says, "(As I watch kids who) are a million miles away, absorbed by the titillating roil of online social life, the addictive pull of video games and virtual worlds, as they stare endlessly at video clips and digital pictures of themselves and their friends, it feels like something is wrong."



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.

Track team suffering from weight room, track issues

by Kaitlin Parente

The indoor track team's season began with a rough start. Between their weight room flooding and the track being closed due to unstable light poles, having successful practices has been next to impossible.

In October, a leak occurred in the weight room underneath the bleachers at the Mt. Royal Stadium, causing water to come through the light fixtures and the ceiling. This closed the weight room, which is primarily used by the indoor and outdoor track teams. The leaks were fixed and dry wall is currently being repaired.

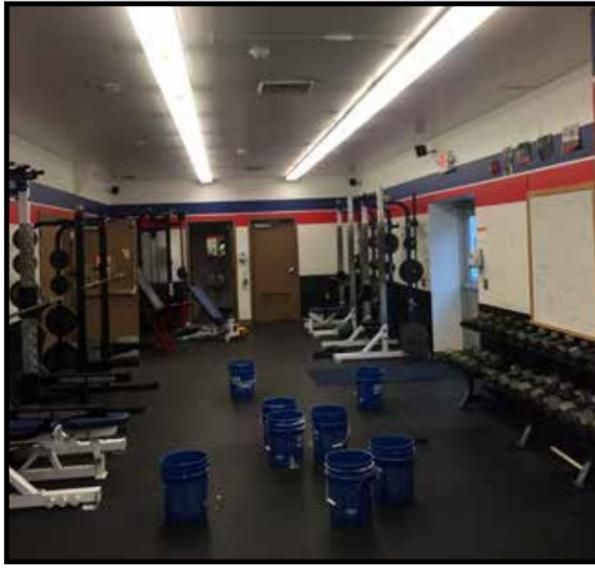
The track team has been forced into tossing medicine balls back and forth due to it being too crowded in the high school weight room. They are also unable to use the weight room located in the middle school because there is not enough of the needed equipment for the team to use there.

Originally, the weight room under the bleachers at the middle school track was created in a joint effort for the football team and track team to share, with the in-season sport having priority. The football team, however, only uses the weight room before varsity games, but the middle school football teams do have priority over the weight room during their season.

"We have had about 40-45 kids for our indoor season, and usually we will add 15-20 more athletes throughout the season. This time of year is the whole backbone for the outdoor season. Our sport is primarily focused on speed and strength so not having access to a weight room definitely is a limitation," Mr. Justin Eskra, indoor track coach, said.

The weight room is set to be completed this month, but it will still put the track team at a disadvantage. The indoor track season, which is a pre-season for the outdoor season, is a time where athletes are able to develop and improve their techniques and grow athletes before seriously competing.

"It is very discouraging not having a place for us to complete our workouts. We've had to make do



Buckets collect water leaking from ceiling in weight room. (Justin Eskra)

with sharing the high school weight room with the general population. This has caused us to have to relocate and make our workouts longer because we have to share the weight room," junior 400 and 800 meter race track team member, Michael Bagwell, said.

The way the indoor and outdoor track seasons are connected is through three time periods of heavy lifting meant to help the athletes prepare for WPIALS in April. Because of the leak in the weight room, the track team has missed out on their first period of lifting and possibly half of their second period depending on how long the repairs take.

"The athletes that have had the most success in our program are the ones who did indoor track and field and worked hard in the weight room. Without this component in our training it would definitely put our kids at a disadvantage come spring time," Eskra said.

On top of not being able to use the weight room, the track at the middle school has been closed until further notice due to the light poles having multiple stress fractures throughout the bases of the poles. The

track team now has to run up and down the middle school halls during practice because of this.

"The light poles inspection was scheduled with the new project to replace track and input turf. The inspection showed some problems with the poles, so that issue needs to be resolved," Mr. Clint Rauscher, the athletic director, said.

There is a current plan with Pitt Electric to get new light poles in hopefully during the holiday break at the end of this month. However the start and completion dates heavily rely on Pitt Electric's availability along with the weather. The track will reopen once the light poles pass inspection and the track is deemed safe.

The track, which will be replaced with the construction starting two days after the 2016 graduation, will be completed by September of 2016. Eventually, a field house will be constructed at the track that will include a new weight room, locker rooms, a concession stand, and restrooms along with the new track turf. The start and end date for the field house is currently unknown.

"I think the track is long overdue and it is going to be a help in the future of the track program, but the next two years are going to be hard without a track. A track is just as important as a field to the football team," Bagwell said.

The track, which has been wearing away for the past 3 years, was deemed unsafe for athletes to run on, causing the track team to not have a home meet in the past season and the upcoming outdoor season.

"Right now if we don't have a home meet I'd be okay with that knowing that we're getting a new track starting next year with the new facility. I think the young kids are really excited. The seniors aren't too happy about that happening though. But the nice thing is if we do travel North Hills, Butler, and Pine Richland all have brand new tracks so the kids are going to be able to run on tracks that have really nice surfacing and there's at least somewhere for us to go," Eskra said.

It's not just Earth Day. It's every day.

In 1962, Chatham alumna Rachel Carson '29 wrote *Silent Spring* and ignited the modern environmental movement. Fifty years later, Chatham broke ground on the world's first community built for the study and practice of sustainability — the net zero Eden Hall Campus. Today, our students use this campus to address environmental challenges in energy, water, food, agriculture, and business in ways that Rachel could only have dreamt about.

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T H E I N S I D E

Where are you, Christmas (Words)?



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

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|----------------|
| COMET | DANCER | DASHER |
| DECEMBER | EGGNOG | GINGERBREADMAN |
| KRISKRINGLE | MISTLETOE | NUTCRACKER |
| ORNAMENT | POINSETTIA | PRACER |
| PRESENTS | RUDOLPH | SAINTNICK |
| STOCKING | TOBOGGAN | |

Christmas Trivia

- Who was the first president to decorate an official Whitehouse Christmas Tree?
 - President Taft
 - President Ford
 - President Pierce
 - President Wilson
- What Canadian province leads the world in exporting Christmas trees?
 - Nova Scotia
 - Quebec
 - Ontario
 - British Columbia
- Which US state was the first to recognize Christmas as an official holiday?
 - Montana
 - Alabama
 - California
 - Pennsylvania
- How many total gifts are mentioned in The Twelve Days of Christmas?
 - 12
 - 78
 - 500
 - 364
- What is the most common Christmas flower in the US?
 - Rose
 - Poinsettia
 - Hydrangea
 - Daisy
- When did Hallmark first introduce their Christmas card?
 - 1902
 - 1911
 - 1915
 - 1918
- How long does it take a Christmas tree to be grown and harvested?
 - 15 years
 - 1 year
 - 6 years
 - 18 years
- What company was the first to use Santa Claus as a winter promotion?
 - Pepsi Co.
 - Coca-cola
 - Kraft
 - Nabisco
- What year was Christmas declared an official holiday in the United States?
 - 1802
 - 1855
 - 1860
 - 1862

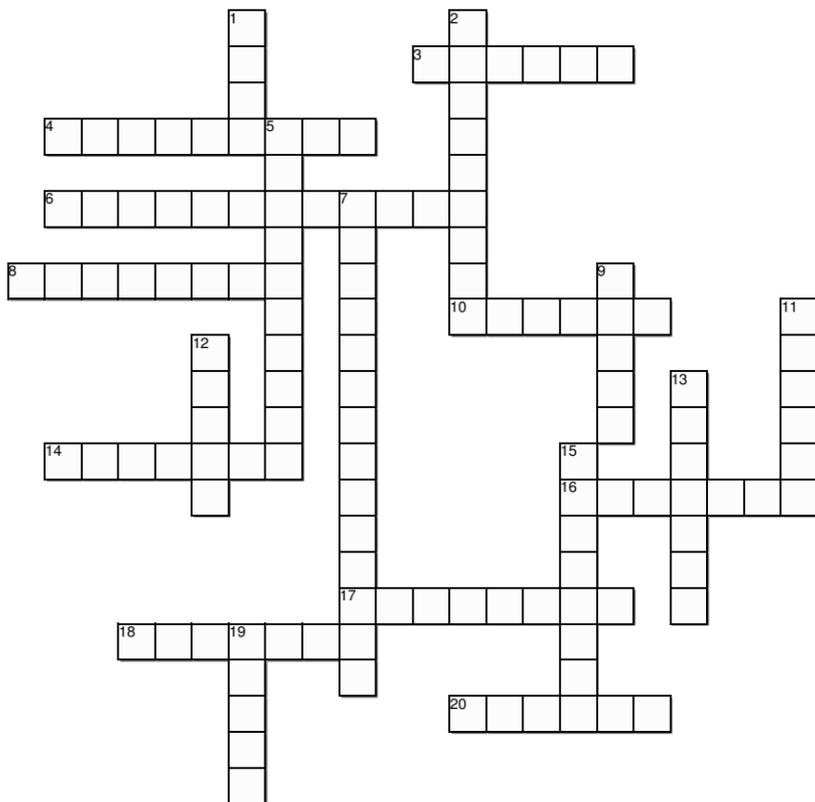
Answers: C, A, B, D, B, C, A, B, A, C



Check us out online

usatodayhss.com/market/shaler-hs-pa

Christmas Crossword



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

- Shiny thin tree decoration
- Hung from the chimney
- Santa's real name
- Jewish holiday lasting 8 days
- Christmas Drink
- Word written on the main character's ticket in the Polar Express
- Santa's leading reindeer
- Month of Christmas
- Celebration that honors African heritage and African-American culture
- The Snowman

Down

- Buddy The Elf's wife
- Justin Bieber's hit Christmas song
- Where Santa lives
- January 1st
- Deck the halls with boughs of ...
- Circular tree branch
- Santa's helpers
- Christmas hater
- Under the tree
- Santa Claus tracker

E D I T I O N

Best Christmas Carol

12 Days
Of Christmas

The First Noel

Joy to the World

Silent Night

Deck the Halls

Jingle Bells

O Holy Night

O Christmas Tree

Oh, What Fun!

Musical Instrument
+ Name of a Reindeer

Tied Rope
+ December 24th

Carried by Reindeer
+ Cows

The 25th of December
+ A Girl's Name

Snow
+ Frankenstein

Snowfall
+ Chinese Cooking

Really Quiet
+ Armed Crusader

Christmas Carols
+ A Dozen Flowers

Answers: First Column - Organ Donner, Sleight Bulls, Snowball Fight, Silent Night
Second Column - The Knot Before Christmas, Christmas Carol, Shovel the Wok, The Twelve
Daisies of Christmas



WEIRD NEWS

The Elf on the Shelf tradition has been a thing in the US for a decade now but has only really hit the UK in a big way in the last few years.

For the uninitiated (i.e. blissfully child-free), the tradition is inspired by an American children's picture book, written in 2005, which explains how Santa uses his elves to find out who's been naughty and nice in the lead up to Christmas.

But there are none who can hold a candle to Joe Wynberg, an American dad-of-four who's been popping up as an elf named 'Fle' all around the house since November 30. His wife Megan wrote on Facebook: 'So we finally caved and decided to do the "Elf on the Shelf" thing. The kids are going to be so surprised! We named our elf FLE and he will be in some pretty precarious spots over the next 24 days! Enjoy.'



THE GRID		What Christmas song could you listen to all year long?	What teacher reminds you most of Scrooge?	"I'm dreaming of a _____"	What question do you hate answering?	When does the Christmas season start?
	Senior Ben Sekely	The Christmas Song	Mr. Stadleman	School year without calc	How's school going?	When the radio starts playing the music
	Junior Taylor Jones	All I want for Christmas is You by Mariah Carey	Mr. Stadleman	New car	How tall are you?	When does it end??
	Sophomore Davis Deasy	Last Christmas by Wham!	Mr. Orsini	Austin Sites	Anything that comes out of Shannon's mouth	July 25th of course
	Freshman Cassidy Rossi	Oh Holy Night	Mr. Williams	white Christmas	How old I am?	November 1st

PIAA changes not well received by WPIAL schools

by Jared Panza

The tides of change have begun in the world of high school sports in Pennsylvania; a change that is being graciously accepted by some, and unwanted by many.

The time has finally come for the PIAA to restructure the classifications, as well as create the first PIAA guidelines for some sports. For example, sports like lacrosse and field hockey will be classed based on enrollment standards set by the PIAA, instead of basing alignment off of program size.

While this realignment was needed to better organize the continuously changing class sizes of PA high schools, many individuals feel as if it just created more issues.

For example, Tim O'Malley, the WPIAL President does not necessarily feel that the realignment fixed anything. While not expressing his personal opinion on the issue, he does provide valid points to negative effects of the new division standards.

"No issues are 'fixed'. The expanded classification was promoted to 'level the playing field from an enrollment standpoint'. It did not accomplish this. Look at Shaler. One of smallest 6A schools with enrollment difference of approximately 1050 students," O'Malley said.

The large gap in the enrollment of the 6A division is one issue that people hoped would be fixed. But instead, the mid-size schools from the Quad-A Northern Eight, Foothills, and Southeastern divisions were put in a combined classification with all of the biggest statistical "outlier" schools like North Allegheny, Butler Area, and Seneca Valley where the enrollment difference from top to bottom (North Allegheny and Peters Township respectively) is incredibly large, over 1000 as O'Malley stated.

In fact, if you split North Allegheny in half, based on their current enrollment numbers, each half of the school would qualify as two 5A schools for all sports.

Even with such a large gap within already, some schools are continuing to grow and others are shrinking. This poses the issue of another 'realignment' in the near future as teams on the border will certainly have the numbers to move up in the divisions.

"I look at it as a whole when down the line when you start comparing district to district you can look at Pine-Richland and say that we are in the same. We basically have the same student body count as they do. What happens in 5 years when they grow by 500? We might shrink by 10 or 100. And that concerns me because are you going to move us down?" Shaler Area school board member Steve Romac said.

Changing class sizes will always be a relevant issue when trying to level the playing field, but some schools like Upper St. Clair that are in 5A are continuing to grow, and do not have very

far to go till the pass up the smaller 6A schools.

"To put [Shaler] in 6A, is just to look at size alone, but I think there are other factors that come into play other than size. I believe that the classifications need to be gone over with a fine tooth comb. I think if you actually look at the projected path of a lot of these districts as to where they're going, and where they are going to end up; you would save everyone with the 'shuffling' later," Romac said.

As well the highly criticized new divisions, there also is concern as to where the WPIAL will host its football championships, as playing six separate game in one day would certainly be impossible, and Heinz Field's natural grass would not be able to withstand six games spread out over a weekend.

O'Malley expressed this concern in an interview done with Mike White for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

"I do not want to be on the end of the phone when we tell a school you made it to the championship for the first time in your life, but you're going to be playing at, say, Charleroi and not Heinz Field. What do we tell them? This is a once-in-a-lifetime achievement but this isn't your year to play at Heinz?" O'Malley told the Post-Gazette.

As well as the location of the championship, other traditions are being put to rest with the new realignment. Some traditions, being mainly rivalries that have attracted a lot of fans on Friday nights, are ones that more than likely will be lost. For example, one of the biggest rivalries in the WPIAL is Hampton v. Mars, and each year attracts larger amounts of fans than usual games do. But within the new standards of the realignment, Hampton and Mars will not play each other due to Mars moving to 4A and Hampton to 5A, even though they only have an enrollment difference of about thirty students.

"I would like to see rivalries continue. I think it makes for an exciting night atmosphere," said Head Hampton football Coach Jacques DeMatteo.

With so many of these issues and concerns, people certainly wonder if the realignment was the best decision for the PIAA at this time.

In a survey created by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, seventy athletic directors responded with how they feel about the realignment. Only twenty-seven percent are in favor of the realignment, almost nineteen percent said WPIAL should drop out of PIAA football, and two athletic directors feel the WPIAL should drop out of the PIAA for all sports if the new alignment goes through.

As these issues continue to pile up, the PIAA is coming under pressure as to how they will fix these issues their new "solution" has created. Their most recent meeting was last week on Thursday, December 17, where the realignment discussion continued.

Senior gets recognition — from page 8

Along with those prizes, this competition provided Dillon with something he had been missing for awhile.

"This competition has changed me in a sense that I gained my confidence back. I truly hadn't felt that good about myself in a really long time and that day gave my downward sloping week a major boost up," Brown said.

For those who are considering applying for the same competition or any scholarship in general, Brown has some advice.

"Apply! You're probably just as unsure as I am if you have any chance of receiving recognition, but I promise you, if you are a passionate student and a competitive athlete, then you should at least try," Brown said.

Unfortunately, Brown did not make it to be a national winner, but he appreciates the experience nonetheless.

"Being recognized by Wendy's as a High School Heisman is truly an honor and one that I am proud to share with people," Brown said.

New basketball coaches striving for success

by Justin Jockel

Heading into this year's basketball season, Shaler announced the hiring of a new boys basketball coach, Coach Robert Niederberger, and a new girls basketball coach, Coach Cornelius Nesbit.

Niederberger grew up less than 10 minutes from Shaler playing for North Allegheny when he was in high school. By growing up in a neighboring district, he saw and competed against some good Shaler players and experienced teams from years past. Niederberger wants to restore the dignity and honor the program had when he played against it.

"I decided to take the job because I've always felt that the personality at Shaler fit mine. I want to bring the pride teams in years past had back to Shaler," Niederberger said.

Niederberger stated that it is very important to him that the boys learn life skills from playing the sport, rather than just looking at the win column.

"Personally, I learned more about life playing between the lines than I did sometimes in the classroom. You always hope and strive to win, but regardless whether you win or lose, these guys need to learn from it. Being a good teammate, being loyal to each other, being accountable for your actions, persevering through tough times, and understanding [real] hard work will be things every kid that plays for me will understand," Niederberger said.

The background for Coach Neiderberger is pretty extensive when it comes to coaching. He has been a coach for the 8th and 9th grade teams at Butler, as well as the varsity assistant. He was also an assistant coach at Vincentian and Ambridge. Niederberger also coached at Burrell High School for three years, where he led the team to a WPIAL Final. He stated it is great to now be at Shaler.

"Now that I'm at Shaler, I feel like I've finally made it home," Niederberger said.

Niederberger states his expectations are not necessarily for the team to win, but rather to compete.

"When I say compete, that means not just in games; but in practice every day. If we do that, the results will come. It is easy to feel great after a win and bad after a loss, but we need to just bring the intensity every day no matter what happens. You need to move forward," Niederberger said.

Nesbit comes to Shaler after coaching AAU basketball for 10 years. Before this, he served 8 years as the head coach at Gateway High School. He has also been the assistant coach at South Fayette High School, Chartiers Valley High School, and LaRoche College. Nesbit states his number one task he looks to accomplish while coaching the girls is to have them realize how great they can be.

"My number one goal is to maximize the full potential of every player in the program and have each player be better at the end of the season than they were at the beginning of the season," Nesbit said.

Nesbit states he took the job at Shaler because of the chance to coach a team in one of the best sections in high school basketball.

"I thought this would be a great challenge to get the program to that next level. The opportunity to coach in what I think is the best section in Quad A basketball. The program has really good players and the commitment to excellence and the passion of the parents and community," Nesbit said.

Nesbit stated that even though he is new to Shaler and to the girls on the team, he feels he has done a good job so far gaining the trust of the girls.

"I believe the trust has to be earned so I have been open and honest with them about my philosophy and I have also embraced the culture and beliefs that they have already established as a program. I have given them ownership of some of the things we want to implement in the program," Nesbit said.



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Senior receives recognition from Wendy's High School Heisman

by Kimberly Yurasits

Many college bound Shaler students look for any way to boost up their applications for college any way they can. Students become involved in after school activities, gain jobs or, if you're senior Dillon Brown, enter into a national competition.

That was the case for Brown, who applied for the fast food restaurant Wendy's High School Heisman award.

Brown found out about the competition from an ad on a Wendy's tray at the famous fast food restaurant on Route 8 in Shaler.

"I was curious as to what a High School Heisman is and it really surprised me what I found. I expected to see all football players because the famous Heisman award is one for football players in college. When I saw tennis, soccer, basketball, track and many other non-football sports, it started to interest me," Brown said.

Eligibility for the award begins with maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or better. Applicants need to be proven leaders and role models within their school and community. Applicants must also compete in at least one of the 43 school-sponsored sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee in the Summer and Winter Olympic Games or the National Federation of State High School Association.

"I first had to first be nominated by an official in the school district, which Mrs. Hunt, did for me. Then I received an email from the program inviting me to fill out a personal application. It was just like any other scholarship application, but the major difference was its emphasis on being a student athlete and how the sport that I play has influenced my life. I really enjoy swimming and feel that it has made me a better person so I had no difficulty filling it out. I might even say writing the essay was actually fun," Brown said.

What followed was a whole lot of waiting



Dillon Brown

and anticipation on Brown's part. Finally, the list of State Finalists was sent out.

"Reading through the list, I saw a girl from Texas, Esther Brown, and thought that I had lost, because E comes after D. So I sat in disappointment for a couple of minutes and decided just to see what other Browns had made it. That's when I saw my name with PA next to it. I couldn't believe that I had actually been chosen out of all of PA to be one of the finalists as a High School Heisman!" Brown said. "I didn't really expect much when I applied because there are plenty of swimmers that are faster than me, but now I realize that the application is more than just recognizing the best athletes on the field; it's about the best *student athletes* on the field. Being told that I am one of PA's top twenty student athletes was really quite amazing," Brown said.

As a state finalist, Brown received a bronze medal, a Wendy's High School Heisman State Finalist patch and a \$25 Wendy's gift card.

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Chris Watts — from page 1

individuals across the country. I really have final say on how I want the vision to go. I have full autonomy on decision making which is a pretty unique position to be in and there's pressure there because I have to perform every day, but it's exciting because it's up to whatever pace or however I want to operate," Watts said.

Along with this power of being in charge comes scheduling flexibility, discipline, and accountability. Watts needs to be able to set expectations with his stakeholders and board on what he wants to do, when he wants to do it, and how it's going to go. Trust is another key component.

"You're accountable for everything and I think some individuals that don't succeed when they're in charge don't take accountability for everything so I am trying to be accountable for everything responsible for our organization. If things don't go well, that's on me. If things go great, that's still on me too," he said.

Watts' most recent recognition for all his hard work was being awarded Shaler's 2015 Distinguished Alumnus Award in November of 2015. Watts was especially proud of this achievement given that it was something he had never thought would be in reach while in high school.

The award was also unique this year since it was given to someone much younger than the norm; this recognition can serve as motivation and inspiration to current students who are just a few years younger than Watts.

"It honestly sounds terribly cliché but, I am humbled, honored, and very proud. When I was here, I remember seeing these names on the wall and hearing about it and just thinking about how those people were just unbelievable, doing crazy stuff. I never even thought that could be me or I could be in this position, so it honestly hasn't sunken in yet."

Watts remembers having a lot of fun with friends in high school who he still calls his best friends today. He said was lucky to have been a part of a grade that wasn't entirely filled with cliques; everyone got along and made the most of their time here.

As advice for current students, Watts said, "Take advantage of being a student, in high school but really in the next step in college, or whatever that next step is. Take advantage of that time to really explore and do as much as you can. Doing as much as you can and getting involved in all of these experiences might be overwhelming, but life is overwhelming. It doesn't get easier. If you can get comfortable with experiencing a lot, that only prepares you for the future and

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