

# The Oracle

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## Living Wall gets a makeover with new plants

by Aubrey Keane &  
Lainey Shipman

The Living Wall in the main lobby has been re-done. This wall, across from the Athletics office, has been stripped of the plants that once resided there and replaced with new ones.

Created in 2014, the Living Wall was a student-led project started by Elliot Fix, Class of 2016. Fix wrote the grant for the wall himself, which received funding from the New Voices of Youth Initiative at The Pittsburgh Foundation and Woolly Pocket Garden Company, Inc. Fix and the GATE Program also received help from the building and grounds crew to visualize it.

“The whole point behind it was to scrub the air. Indoor plants are supposed to be really good for keeping the air clean and that was his whole push. (Elliot) was very environmentally conscious,” GATE teacher Mrs. Christina Palladino said.

Several different plants that are low light tolerant, house plants will be grown on the wall including Anthurium, Pilea, Japanese Asplenium nidus fern, and Peperomia Obtipan. The plants can be grown year-round, and are watered automatically through a watering system connected in the ceiling. The plants are arranged specifically to grow in a zig-zag pattern along the wall.

For some unexplained reason, the watering system is not as effective on the left side of the wall so succulent plants, ones that do not need as much watering, are being installed on that side.

The teachers involved have consulted other businesses who have living walls and looked at pictures of them for inspiration. The concept is fairly popular at the moment and seems to be a trend in schools and other larger buildings.

The wall has a subconscious effect on the student body. Even if students and teachers haven’t paid much attention to it, they did notice once the plants



were removed.

Because many of the rooms in the high school do not have windows, the wall serves the purpose of beautifying the school, improving the air quality and promoting biodiversity in the community. Sustainability teacher Ms. Abbey Nilson, whose club is helping the GATE program with the project, said that the wall will “promote good air quality, boost mood, and lower stress.”

“I like the plants and I think there should be more around the school,” junior Lena Murphy said.

More projects like this are unlikely because of the cost and maintenance involved.

One of the biggest issues with the wall is simple upkeep of the project. At first, kids wanted to help with the wall, but once those kids graduated, the number of students who were willing to help dwindled.

Mrs. Kathleen Elder and Mrs. Palladino, who run the GATE Program, are hoping there are current students willing to help with the Living Wall. They will need help pruning the plants and pulling off the dead leaves once in the fall and once in the spring. They will also need help decorating the wall for the holidays. If you are interested in helping, you can email Mrs. Elder or stop by the GATE room.

The point of the wall, outside of the aesthetic value, is to purify the air in the lobby. Mrs. Elder said that they will be testing the air quality in this area before and after the Living Wall is reinstalled.

The upkeep of the wall is fairly easy. The watering system will automatically turn on and water the plants throughout the week. The cost of the project is around \$1,000 and will be funded by the Shaler Area Education Fund.

## Class funds are low; class officers looking to raise money

by Julia Barbaty &  
Elena Flavin

By senior year, each Shaler Area class needs to meet a class funds goal of \$30,000 in order to experience the senior year events everyone looks forward to. Class funds are essential as they help to cover the many costs of senior year including prom tickets, senior dinner, and the zoo trip.

“Normally classes would come to high school with about \$20,000 and then from there we knew we could do four years to build up to \$30,000,” Activities Director Mrs. Mindy Thiel said.

With that being said, fundraisers and student involvement are vital.

Since the pandemic, there has been decreasing numbers for class funds. When quarantine went into effect, things such as meetings and discussions for the fundraisers paused.

However, warning signs about class funds occurred even before the pandemic hit. At the start of the 2019-2020 school year, the District Parent Council (DPC) was collecting \$5 from each student before they came to high

school, but even at that time prices were rising and Mrs. Thiel wanted to raise that amount from \$5 to \$10.

Once the pandemic hit, the discussion about this increase stopped and no action was taken. Schools are now still being urged to raise more money for the students not yet in high school in order to meet their goal.

Currently, all four of the classes in the high school do not have as much money as would have been expected in the past.

“Seniors are sitting at approximately \$21,000, juniors \$15,000, sophomores \$14,000, and freshmen just shy of \$8,000,” Mrs. Thiel said.

With these numbers, seniors may be concerned about how that may affect end-of-year events. Lowering the prices is the main purpose of class funds, but each class may have to decide what their priorities are in determining what prices will be reduced. In past years, prom ticket price reduction was seen as the main focus.

“The biggest thing is prom; reducing the price of prom tickets is number one, reducing the price of senior dinner

tickets is number two, and the zoo is probably number three and then other little things along the way,” Thiel said.

Class officers are now trying to come up with ideas to meet the goals for each of their classes. They are also trying to get students more involved and excited.

“Meeting with the senior class officers, we have to be more proactive on our end knowing that classes aren’t coming in freshman year with \$20,000,” Thiel said.

However, there are many other things that can be done to improve class funds. For example, coming up with a successful fundraiser could bring in a good amount of money.

“A big event is the best thing to do, like juniors are planning the Winter classic (a volleyball tournament)...that could be a couple thousand dollars,” Thiel said.

The Winter classic for the junior class is going to occur December 22nd, the half day before Christmas break. Registration and entry fees will help raise money. If you are not involved, teachers have the option to take their

students to watch the tournament by paying \$5 before entrance. Many seem excited to get involved in this fundraising event and there should be a positive outcome.

Another idea is possibly bringing back a dodgeball tournament that senior class sponsor, Mr. William Mitchell, previously organized.

In 2009, “Shalerpalooza”, an event in which student bands performed a concert at Mr. Smalls Theater, was created and was repeatedly successful in raising funds for the classes.

One of the biggest issues in trying to raise funds is student participation. For fundraisers to be beneficial, students have to be interested and attend them. Support for the fundraisers is currently low, and change needs to occur in order to prevent future graduating classes from facing the same issues as the current senior class.

Many students look forward to activities such as prom, the zoo trip, and graduation. Class funds are vital to reduce the costs of these events and would be a welcome relief to many seniors so they can afford these things.



OPINIONS

New Texas law highlights the state’s hypocrisy

by Kamaria Mutadabur

A Texas law that will go into effect on May 11 will allow parties to sue tech companies if they censor someone based on their political viewpoints. The Texas law came to light after a perceived “anti-conservative bias” observation was made. Basically, claiming that tech companies silence far right political voices for expressing their thoughts more often than far left voices. A specific example that is often used in this argument is when former president Donald Trump was banned from Twitter.

This new law opened the possibility for important discussions surrounding the question of who can truly dictate our right to free speech. Which is great, fantastic even, if only it wasn’t completely hypocritical of the state of Texas.

It is comical that in Texas logic, it is okay for far right leaders to encourage others to commit treason and spread bigotry, but it is definitely not okay for children to learn things and expand their knowledge through books so certain books must be banned. Speaking of banned books, an article from The Texas Tribune cited a report that Texas is the state with the most banned books in the nation: 801 books across 22 school districts.

Let that sink in for a moment – 801 books.

The majority of banned books in Texas have themes about issues of race, racism, abortion and the LGBTQ+ community, all of which are political hot-button topics. This is important to note because ac-



According to an article on abc13.org, Texas governor Abbott’s press secretary, in response to those upset about the censorship decisions, stated that “schools need to get away from pushing political agendas and get back to fundamentals – reading, writing, math, and science.”

So while leaders in Texas say that tech companies should not censor political opinions, the same logic is not applied to those who want to censor of left-leaning voices. Their unspoken message is that as long as the censorship benefits them or their beliefs, it is tolerable.

Learning about minority experiences and diverse communities in school (where you are supposed to learn) does not harm or help either political party; it only benefits the general knowledge of those in our society.

With that being said, at the end of the day, all censorship is bad. Whether it comes to banning po-

litical opinions or books that talk of diversity, it is always unacceptable.

Censorship of political opinions is wrong because issues don’t get solved without communication. Whether we agree or disagree on certain topics, silencing each other destroys any possibility of compromise. Even just by listening, we can use others’ experiences to gain a simple mutual understanding. That is why we live under a democratic government – to be able to talk and listen to each other in order to shape what we know of America today. By censoring others based on political opinions, we move away from potential solutions and the possibility of a more unified society.

The same thinking should be applied to censorship of books in schools as well. Students deserve to have access to information from all outlooks so that they can shape and express their own opinions. Using the excuse that something is or is not appropriate rips all possible chances for that child to make decisions for themselves.

It is also a selfish mindset to think that a student doesn’t deserve access to the same information about the world that adults do. Just because some topics give a possibility of swaying a reader a certain way, it does not give a reason or right to ruin that opportunity.

If Texas is truly against censorship, not just censorship of things or people that benefit one political party, then maybe it should consider putting 801 book titles back onto shelves in schools.

A purple M&M does not promote inclusion and acceptance

by Sarah Naccarato

On September 28th, the Mars company announced the creation of the purple M&M. Now don’t be mistaken, there will not be a purple M&M added to the bags of M&Ms. This is only to be creation of a new character. Everyone has seen the silly little commercials starring the M&M characters before seeing a new movie. It is this type of company promotion that the purple M&M will be added to, but not the actual product.

If you go to the company’s website, you can find a tab titled “Experience M&Ms,” under which you can “meet the crew” and read the M&M purpose statement. Each character has an individualized profile page with a few questions and answers revealing their most distinctive qualities.

“With her optimistic outlook, quirky nature, and authentic charm, our newest crew member reminds us to embrace our true selves,” the website reads about Purple.

This was partnered with a music video titled “I’m Just Gonna Be Me.” For each view of the video, M&M’s committed a one dollar donation, up to \$500,000, to the Sing for Hope nonprofit organization which creates art for societal progress. The main idea that is being pushed by the company is that Purple is supposed to promote inclusivity and acceptance. While most likely a lot of people aren’t up to date on “M&M news,” this may ring a bell in regards to what could be referred to as the M&M shoe controversy.

In January of this year, the green M&M notoriously switched shoes from high-heeled boots to a more comfortable pair of sneakers, similar to how the brown M&M switched into a relatively shorter heel. While a change in footwear of an imaginary candy character does not seem like it would be a big deal, it apparently was. Many people had very strong reactions as news platforms shouted opinions from the rooftops. Although, some people had some more “extreme” opinions regarding the matter.

“M&Ms will not be satisfied until every last cartoon character is deeply unappealing and totally androgynous, until the moment you wouldn’t want to have a drink with any one of them. That’s the goal,” Tucker Carlson of Fox News ranted.

Carlson came to the conclusion that it was important M&M characters were sexually appealing to the general public and found the shoe change to be a step towards some deliberate agenda. While I can understand that a change in a cartoon’s attire is rather useless in the brand’s previous attempt to “promote inclusivity”, I don’t particularly find the end of the world near, nor am I



concerned as to whether or not I am attracted to a fictitious candy character. I feel as though a multi-million dollar company could put their money elsewhere in order to show that they are willing to make a change.

What the majority of people do not know is that a bit before the shoe controversy. Mars, Hershey, and Nestle were involved in a lawsuit about child labor and child slavery to make their chocolate products. In the beginning of 2021, eight children came forward about being forced into slave labor in Ivory Coast cocoa farms. These children claimed that the companies had enslaved thousands of children for their profit. While you let that sink in, consider that, according to a New York Times article, Ivory Coast is responsible for about 45% of cocoa production.

Over the course of the last couple years, there has been a long fight over these allegations. On June 28 of this year, the case was dismissed. While the conspiracy that the M&M shoe change designed to redirect the company’s media portrayal is still floating around, that isn’t all that matters.

It’s okay to enjoy or laugh at silly brand cartoons, but no matter what shoes a cartoon character wears or what is represented in the color purple, corporations should still be held accountable for their actions. If they want to show they promote inclusivity and acceptance, they should put their money towards actions that will help.

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 [schotte@sasd.k12.pa.us](mailto:schotte@sasd.k12.pa.us).

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



# SAHS students honor and remember Tree of Life victims

by Danielle Berdik

In 2018, the city of Pittsburgh experienced a tragedy when a gunman entered the Tree of Life Synagogue and opened fire, injuring seven and killing 11. Every year since the attack, the victims are honored.

October 27, 2022, marked the four-year anniversary of the tragedy. Shaler Area High School students involved in Mrs. Abbey Nilson’s Sustainability class, Ms. Catlyn Dispasquale’s LIGHT classes (Holocaust and Multicultural Studies), and the student LIGHT ambassadors traveled to the Tree of Life Synagogue and Chatham University for a remembrance ceremony and a panel discussion with current Chatham students. The university is also now home to the new Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh which is on the edge of the school’s campus.

The LIGHT initiative started as an extension of the Holocaust class at Shaler Area High School. The goal of program was to bring awareness to genocides and antisemitism, however it has evolved into promoting diversity and inclusion in addition to Holocaust awareness.

The students first arrived at the Tree of Life Synagogue and participated in numerous activities including an art gallery walk-through and a presentation given by a Tree of Life Ambassador which included a reading of the names of the 11 victims.

The students completed a clean-up of the backyard area at the Holocaust Center, picking up things like branches, leaves, and other debris. Currently, the building is being renovated to provide an inviting place for visitors to explore, as well as a field trip destination for the LIGHT classes. This will ultimately provide students with a new space, environment, and experience.

The students greatly enjoyed cleaning up the building as it was an act that directly impacted their community. This excitement was even shown through their work.

“It took us almost no time at all to finish it up because we had so many people working hard,” junior Keira Kennedy said.

The students will also be given the chance to revisit the site in the spring. In this planned visit, they hope to plant flowers and pollinator bushes around the building to brighten it up. They also hope to implement possible design ideas that students brainstormed in this past trip.

One student came up with the idea to have 11 different



Shaler students helping to clean up at the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh

ferent flowers planted to honor each of the 11 victims, another brought up the idea of an outdoor classroom in the backyard. The main intent for the building is to honor the Tree of Life Synagogue while creating an interactive workspace for students. For example, the inside of the building will include educational resources and learning spaces for students.

Two victims of the Tree of Life shooting, Cecil and David Rosenthal were very active members of their community. After they were killed in the shooting, the family advocated for random acts of kindness in honor of the brothers.

This prompted people to get out and do things to better their community instead of simply mourning the victims. By going out on this field trip and planning more in the future to improve the new Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, Shaler Area students are answering this call to action and honoring the victims of the tragedy that occurred right in their backyard.

The students then went to Chatham University where a presentation was given in regard to the application process of Chatham and information about

attending the university.

“The presentation was very helpful, especially for the school itself,” junior Alice Yang said.

Students were also given the opportunity to talk with current students and ask any questions about going to college. This was helpful for the current Shaler students because they could hear directly from college students who were honest about their experiences.

Many high school students have never stepped foot onto a college campus and do not know what a school may have to offer, however, this gave them the opportunity to discover these new possibilities.

“The other students on the panel were really great because they were just so well rounded in explaining what Chatham has to offer even outside of the classroom,” DiPasquale said.

Chatham was chosen to visit because of its work in building upon the climate of diversity and inclusion around its school. Social justice and sustainability are two of the school’s main pillars when it comes to its atmosphere.

# SAMS celebrates Veterans Day with annual program

by Avery Gallant

Every year around Veterans Day, Shaler Area Middle School hosts a breakfast and program for about 300 local veterans and their families. The celebration has been going on for 15 years. The two-hour celebration consists of coffee, breakfast, performances from the choir and speeches from administration and students.

This year, about 200 veterans attended the breakfast, a pretty good turn out considering the breakfast has not occurred for the past couple of years because of the pandemic. Last year, the breakfast was put on the back burner and a drive through celebration for the veterans replaced it. Veterans would drive by in their cars as students held up flags and signs to thank them for their service as well as offering coffee and donuts.

“It was so great to see everyone after two years,” Mrs. Merit McDaniel, organizer and middle school teacher, said.

Students were involved in serving breakfast, singing songs and writing essays to read to the veterans. An essay contest put out to the entire school prompted students to write an essay on what freedom means to them. There were many



wonderful essays, but only two were chosen. Winners of the essay contest were honored in reading their essays in front of the veterans as they enjoyed their breakfast.

KDKA-TV also attended the breakfast and interviewed Veterans and students about the breakfast. They recorded students sitting down with Veterans as they told them stories about their experiences in combat.

“The thing that I like about it is that these youngsters are learning about this history because so much of this has been

forgotten by our school system,” Joanne McVay, attendee of the breakfast, said.

The veterans and their families enjoyed the breakfast and being able to spend time with other veterans while sharing their stories with students. Many veterans proudly wore their uniforms, jackets, medals and hats that they received in their time of duty. The 7th and 8th grade chorus performed the Marches of the Armed Forces song. The chorus sang each branch of the military’s song as the veterans stood up to be honored for the branch that they served in.

“It totally brings tears to my eyes because they are so proud,” Mrs. Merit McDaniel said.



# Broadway performer talks about life on the stage

Switzer has been part of national tours of “Wicked”, “Mean Girls”, “Frozen”, “CATS”, “Newsies”

by Hannah Stelitano

Back in October, the “Frozen” tour made a stop in Pittsburgh at the Benedum Center. Daniel Switzer, singer, dancer, and actor, plays many substantial parts in this musical, helping to create the magic of the story truly come to life.

From a young age, Broadway star Daniel Switzer always knew where his heart was- on the stage. Whether it be singing, dancing, or acting, Switzer loved every second of it.

“When I was a kid, I loved musical theater. I decided to get involved in community theaters, dance studios, and participate in any other theater opportunities I was given from my young age up until today.”

Growing up in St. Louis Missouri, Switzer certainly had to work his way up in the theater world to land his spot on Broadway. Theater in LA is extremely competitive and intense so he had to really be able to prove himself in the industry. Switzer did this initially by taking dance classes at a young age through a local dance studio. He instantly fell in love with the art.

“I really enjoyed any type of dance that had lots of energy and gusto.”

Switzer loved taking musical theater dance classes the most and because of this, he asked his parents to enroll him in singing lessons as well as many local theater programs. Gateway Playhouse, 3-D Theatricals, Round Barn Theater, and Timber Lake Playhouse are just a few of the programs that Switzer has been in productions through.

While being a part of many productions through his school and other theater programs, taking countless dance classes a week, having multiple acting and singing coaches, and also participating in tons of incentives to further his passion, Switzer certainly stayed busy. His schedule was constantly filled with all activities musical theater related.

After graduating high school, he attended college as a musical theater major at Rockford University in Illinois and after graduating college, moved

into the professional theater world. His first step in the professional world was going to LA to get his equity card and then joining the union. An equity card shows proof of membership in the Actors’ Equity Association of the United State and ensures that you are a professional. This was a huge step in Switzer’s career considering that he did not know what he wanted to do when he was growing up. He loved musical theater, but was not sure of how to make it a career.

“Growing up, I knew that I loved musical theater and was drawn to it but I really didn’t know I wanted to get into it professionally.”

After gaining his equity card, Switzer was immediately picked up by “CATS” the musical and offered a spot in their cast. In the production he played Mungojerrie, a young, high-energy character. This role fit his demeanor in real life perfectly as he was fresh out of college and loved anything high energy. After the “CATS” tour, he joined the “Wicked” tour as an ensemble character with an understudy of Boq.

Switzer made his first Broadway debut on the “Mean Girls” tour as an ensemble character. This experience was incredible for Switzer considering it was his first time hitting a Broadway stage. Another pivotal point in Switzer’s career has been being a part of the “Newsies” national tour. He was in the ensemble for this show as well as being an understudy for Race and Davey, two of the lead characters in the musical.

“In Newsies, there are amazing dance moments of strength that get told through a perspective of youth moving into maturity.”

“Newsies” is a high energy, dance-heavy musical that shows the struggles that some go through in their lives. It is a great story portrayed through much dancing, which is what Switzer loves.

The “Newsies” tour has also been picked up by Disney+, which is incredible for Switzer since people can watch him perform at any time now, not just in the theater.



Daniel Switzer

“The dance has a lot of fight and bite to it and a lot of times it’s conveying a message of angst and wanting to improve upon where they are in life.”

Currently, Switzer is on the “Frozen” tour and he is in the ensemble every night as an understudy of Olaf and Wesleton. It is clear that his hard work, training, and dedication has truly paid off looking all of the award winning shows he has been a part of.

“I feel like I’m a unique person in the fact that I grew up dancing so I have a dance background but I started singing right after and I studied acting in college. I like to think of myself as a true triple threat.”

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# Student trip to Egypt set for 2024



by Hannah Stelitano

Shaler Area High School students are invited to attend a trip to Egypt in 2024. Mr. Jason Purring, Civics and Government teacher, has been involved in study abroad trips since he started his teaching career at Shaler in 2007. Due to COVID-19, the trips have been on hold but he is excited to finally bring them back.

“I’ve taken hundreds of students to Italy, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Turkey, and Greece in the past. 2018 was our last trip we took, and I really wanted to bring them back again as soon as I could after the pandemic,” he said.

There was an information meeting on December 7 that Purring said went well. If anyone is interested in learning more about the trip, please stop and see Mr. Purring or email him at [purringj@shalerarea.org](mailto:purringj@shalerarea.org).

The trip includes five overnight stays at a hotel in Egypt and 3 overnight stays in cabins on a cruise ship. A professional tour guide will also come along to every stop on the tour. The guides have a background of the landmarks in Egypt, making the tours even more interesting and impactful.

A few of the many stops on the trip include seeing the Sphinx and Pyramids of Giza, going on an Egyptian cruise, and seeing the temples of Sobek and Haroeris.

“I wanted to take a trip that is more of an adventure. My favorite trip was Turkey, so I wanted to do something ‘Indiana Jones’ themed where we truly dive into history while doing a trip that is completely different from any other. I have always wanted to go to Egypt, and I knew that this was the right time,” Mr. Purring said.

Mr. Purring encourages all students to take this study abroad opportunity. It is life-changing and something that those involved will never forget.

“I went on a six month study abroad program to Australia in 2004 and came back completely changed. This specific trip made me have

more respect for our country and everything we have but also opened my eyes to opportunities that other countries have. I want all students to experience these life-changing trips like I did, and really encourage everyone who can to take the opportunity to travel to Egypt,” Purring said.

**“I went on a six month study abroad program to Australia in 2004 and came back completely changed...I want all students to experience these life-changing trips like I did, and really encourage everyone who can to take the opportunity to travel to Egypt.”**

**-- Mr. Jason Purring**

# Parking space painted as part of PBIS program



by Hannah Stelitano

In another great effort to promote positivity and mental health awareness through our school, the National Art Honors Society (NAHS) has partnered with the PBIS (positive behavior interventions and support team) to paint a parking spot in the upper lot. This parking space gives off a positive message that allows students to start their day with a good mindset as they walk into school each morning.

Every two weeks, the PBIS team raffles off prizes on the SATV mid-day announcements. One of the prizes was principal Dr. Royall’s parking spot. This spot is desired because it is extremely close to the school, opposed to the student parking spots which are in the lower lot behind the school.

When a student won this prize, they suggested that the spot should be painted. The sponsors of NAHS, Mr. Brad Susa and Mr. Jeff Frank, held a contest to see who could come up with the best design for the spot.

“The painting is of a sun with colorful designs, ultimately giving off the message to ‘be the light for others,’” Mr. Susa said.

Many students helped to create this artwork, making the project even more special and enjoyable.

“At least 15 people participated during school or came after school to help paint the spot. It was a collective effort by multiple kids,” Mr. Frank said.

“We couldn’t be happier to have our students create art to make the school beautiful,” Mr. Susa said.

# Winter Classic Volleyball tournament set to return

by Sam Himrod & Brady McGuire

The Winter Classic Volleyball tournament is coming back. Here is everything that you need to know about the tournament.

The tournament will take place on December 22, 2022, the half-day before holiday break. It will run during periods two through nine. The tournament was brought back by the junior class officers and proceeds will go to the junior class funds.

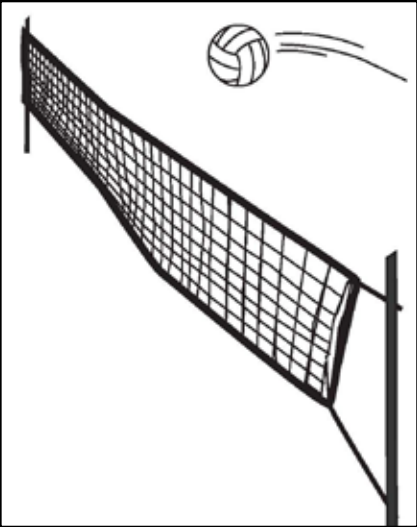
“From team registrations, we will make, hopefully, \$1000 if all 20 teams sign up,” said Junior Class President Isabelle Dutkovic.

The encouraging thing for the junior class was that 19 of the 20 team spots were filled as soon as registration opened up.

Also, classes that would like to come down and watch the Winter Classic are invited and students will have to pay an entrance fee of five dollars.

In order to compete in the tournament, players must meet the guidelines of the tournament. Players can not be double rostered meaning they must be on only one team. Players can’t have six absences in a class (excused or unexcused) or less than a C in any one of their classes. Players also may not have any behavioral disciplines including a Restricted List member, outstanding detentions, more than one In or Out-of School Suspension, and has not committed a Level 4 infraction

The teams can consist of 6-8 players, but only 2 of those players can be boys



or girls volleyball players. There is a maximum of 20 teams, and they will be broken up into two polls of ten teams each.

Gym A will be set up with two nets, allowing for four teams to play at a time.

“It will be an abbreviated round-robin play format. The games will be played in 15 minute intervals, so it won’t be necessarily to a score, it will be whoever wins after 15 minutes,” Mr. Paul Stadelman, math teacher and boys varsity volleyball head coach, said.

Points will be awarded based on wins, and also if a team in a poll beats a team in the opposing poll, giving teams a rooting interest when not on the court.

The top eight teams with the highest points scored at the end of round-robin play will advance to the next round, in which it is single loss elimination from that point forward.

“We encourage teams to dress up in team costumes or uniforms” said Mrs. Mindy Thiel, history teacher and activities director.

“There might be some special prizes given away for best costume team, most spirited team” Thiel said.

When asked about a prize for the winning team, Mr. Stadelman gave a simple answer, “Bragging rights.”

“I think the students should know that this is meant to be a thing to reward them for all of their work so far this school year,” Mr. Stadelman said.



# Class of 2022 inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame

by Andrew Deal

The Shaler Area School District recently inducted three former athletes, one former coach, and a former WPIAL championship baseball team into the Shaler Area Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

All-WPIAL baseball player Bill Heinz, record setting track and field athlete Victoria Soeder, two-sport star Ben Yeckel, the 1981 WPIAL champion baseball team, and track and field coach Sam Bair Jr. were inducted. The class was honored on October 15 at the Shaler Area Varsity Football game.

Heinz played a huge role on the 1982 and 1983 section title winning baseball teams. In 1983, he led the Titans with 45 hits, still a team record to this day. Heinz also led the team in doubles, triples, home runs and batting average. He was named to the All-Section Team and the All-WPIAL team. He then went on to play at the University of Iowa and was recognized as an All-Big Ten member his senior year.

Soeder still holds multiple records in indoor and outdoor track and field. She is already part of the Hall of Fame as a member of the 2012 Varsity Girls Track Team, but her individual accomplishments make her worthy of an individual induction, as well. She won three PIAA medals in the hurdles and triple jump, and seven WPIAL medals in the hurdles, long jump, and triple jump.

Yeckel earned seven varsity letters in wrestling and baseball. On the mat, he had a career record of 83-15, and played a major role in three consecutive section championships from 1998-2000. However, Yeckel really stood out as a baseball player. As a pitcher and captain, he led the 1999 Titan Baseball team to a WPIAL Championship and PIAA runner up. He ranks 4th all time in career record among Shaler pitchers, 22-9. His other school records include 224 innings pitched, which ranks first, and 197 strikeouts, which ranks second all time. He was named the 1999 Post Gazette North Player of the Year. He also was named to the USA Today Honorable Mention as one of the top 25 players in Pennsylvania.

"It's a huge honor. There are so many great



**Seated: Tim Kotkevich, Bill Heinz, Tori Soeder, Sam Bair, Jr., Ben Yeckel, Ken Yurek Standing: Kevin Walsh, Jack Gralewski, John Kuzemchak, Ken Roman, Dave Fortun, Dan Neimetz, George Matthews, John Miller**

athletes that have come through Shaler Area. To be mentioned with them it's quite the honor. Getting to come back and teach and coach at Shaler has made this an even greater memory," Yeckel said. "Winning a WPIAL baseball championship as both a player and coach at the same school in 1999 and 2019 is a pretty amazing accomplishment."

The 1981 Shaler Area Varsity Baseball was coached by two Hall of Fame Inductees, Jerry Matulevic and Dave Fortun. The team compiled an overall record of 29-2 and were crowned WPIAL Champions before being eliminated in the PIAA state quarterfinals. Six players were named to the Post Gazette's All North Team. 12 players went on to play in college, and three played professionally. About half of the 1981 team players were also on the 1980 state championship team, as reserves.

"These guys were determined to create their own identity and show that they also had what it takes. And they did," Fortun said.

Matulevic led this team to be recognized as not just one of, but the premier team in Western Pennsylvania. The pitching staff was what really put fear into

other teams. Starter Chip Peluso never lost a game on the mound in high school. Ken Karcher was 24-0 until he got the loss in the state quarterfinals.

Bair Jr. distinguished himself first as a runner and then as a longtime Track and Field and Cross Country coach for Shaler Area. At Scottsdale Joint High School he earned nine varsity letters and was a two-time state champion in the 800 meter.

He went on to run at Kent State University where he was a seven-time NCAA All-American. He also was a silver medalist in the Pan-American Games in the mile. In 1969, he ran the second fastest mile time in the United States at 3.56.7. As a coach at Shaler Area, he was a year long coach and trainer for Shaler runners who won multiple WPIAL and PIAA medals. Sam and his son, Sam Bair III, who has already been inducted in the Hall of Fame, are only the 14th father and son combination in the world to run a sub four-minute mile.

Originally created in 2000, the Shaler Area Athletic Hall of Fame can consist of teams, individual athletes or coaches. The class of 2022 features all three in a well-rounded class.

## Slow Pitch softball team wins WPISL championship

by Brady McGuire

The Shaler Girls Slow Pitch Softball team made history this season by winning the first WPISL Championship in school history.

Going into the season, the Titans knew this could be one of their best seasons in school history. They were led by eight experienced seniors and new head coach Mr. Tom Bursick.

The Titans finished up their regular season with a 13-1 record. The only loss occurred early in the season when they lost 4-1 to North Allegheny.

"The girls were dominant in almost every game with most games leading the whole way through. On the rare occasion when we needed a big defensive stand or a few strong hits to get a run over the plate, the girls delivered," Coach Bursick said.

The strong season was led by an explosive offense and a reliable defense for the Titans. The pattern of the season seemed to be scoring a lot of runs for and not allowing a lot of runs.

"Shaler's defense was on point every game. We only had two games all season where opponents scored more than nine runs. The girls also had their share of 20-plus run blowout wins, scoring 12 runs in the 1st inning before the other team made their first out on us," Coach Bursick said.

One of Shaler's toughest chal-



lenges during the regular season was a game against Bethel Park. The game had been rescheduled and some of Shaler's players either showed up late or missed the game completely. Even with roster issues, Shaler still persevered and won the game.

"Once we got there and the game got going, it was a battle. Game went into extra innings and one of the late players came into the game in the 5th, and immediately hit a two-run triple. We played in cold weather until after 10:30. It was a fun night full of high emotions and we came out on top."

Going into the playoffs the Titans were the top seed in the tournament.

Shaler started the playoffs with a first round bye. Shaler's quarter-final

matchup would be against North Hills. The game was tied 7-7 in the bottom of the 6th when junior shortstop Hannah Guiste belted a three-run double to make the score 10-7.

The Titans would hold on and win the game. Even though Shaler pulled out a hard fought victory in the quarterfinals, their next game would not be as difficult. Shaler defeated West Allegheny 16-6 in the semi-finals.

The finals would be played later that day against the only team to beat the Titans in the regular season, North Allegheny. Shaler was helped out in the championship game by an amazing double play by senior left fielder Caroline Radzinski who caught a fly ball and a then made a nice throw home to

senior catcher Tia Jarosinski allowed her to make the tag for the double play. Shaler would go on to defeat North Allegheny 12-7 and secure the first WPISL title in school history.

"Winning the championship was crazy. At first I didn't believe that we actually did it. The Shaler Softball Club has never won the championship before. I was really proud that my team was able to make history and win," Guiste said.

The Titans journey to the championship was supported by contributions from the offense, defense, and pitching. Junior Tessa Bursick was a standout pitcher that tossed 13 strikeouts throughout the season. The Titans also had an explosive offense with 10 home runs hit on the season: Guiste (5), sophomore Megan Haynes (2), Bursick (1), and senior Savannah Yount (1).

The standout part of the season was the Titan defense. Outfielders Yount, Haynes, and Radzinski locked down the outfield all season making great plays all year. Catchers Jarosinski and senior Ana Hartz both helped the team cut down runs at the plate. The outstanding Titan infield was fielded by Guiste, senior Olivia Sperl, senior London Thom, senior Ashlee Woodrick, and senior Angelina Kusar.

"I just want these girls recognized for all their hard work. What they did was amazing," Coach Bursick said.





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# Student Spotlight

## Search for Santa and his reindeer



The Oracle is looking for creative students to share their works! This may include but is not limited to artwork, writing, photography, and student-made objects such as pottery or even wood shop creations.

This month we've selected a painting by senior Emma Ranallo who told us about her work.

"My inspiration for the artwork was by following the prompt to choose a song lyric and create Pre-Raphaelite art from it. I chose "Can't Help Falling Love" and picked the lyric "like a river flows, surely to the sea". With that, I created two subjects in a river of water to go along with the song. Then I went from there with adding other details like trees, and a dove in the sky. This piece took me about 9 or 10 hours to complete," Ranallo said.

If you are interested in having your work in our spotlight, please scan the QR code which will take you to our Google form.



Santa

Dasher

Dancer

Prancer

Vixen

Comet

Cupid

Donner

Blitzen

Rudolph



THE GRID		If you had one day left to live, what would you do?	If you could go back in time, what historical event would you like to witness?	What is your go-to gas station order?	Best Christmas cookies?	Top item on your wish list?
Freshman Alexis Frisbee		Spend it with family and friends	The Renaissance	Coffee and bagel	Snickerdoodle	New pair of skis
Sophomore Olivia Gannon		Travel to Italy	The eruption of Mount Vesuvius	Chicken tenders and curly fries	Peanut butter blossoms	Vacation
Junior Zac Wurzer		Break laws	The stock market crash	White powdered sugar mini donuts and Golden Peak sweet tea	Pillsbury cookies	Christmas break
Senior Sydnee Cruz		Go to Disney	The caveman era	App sampler with mac and cheese bites, boneless bites, and tater tots	Sugar cookies	Mr. machine coffee
Faculty Balsomico Sensei		Spend the whole day at the Shaler high school, because Shaler is paradise	The founding of the Earth	Gas	Sugar cookies, period	Happiness, something I've never had before



# Football team finishes season with best record in 12 years

by Sam Himrod

The Titan football team had its best season in recent history with a 5-5 record, being .500 for the first time in 12 years. This success was no surprise to head coach Mr. Jim Ryan.

“We had high expectations. We went into the season knowing we had a lot of talent and great leadership,” he said. “We believed we were going to turn some heads.”

And turn some heads they did. The Titans had excellent individual play and some great team successes.

Senior RB Luke Cignetti started the season on a tear. He was leading the WPIAL in rushing yards and had 11 touchdowns through the first three weeks of the season, including a monster game at Plum where he scored 5 touchdowns and rushed for 283 yards.

The Titans started the season off with an away loss to Butler, but they were ready for a week 2 rivalry game, with Hampton coming to Shaler to play. Hampton controlled the game through three quarters, and then something clicked for the Titans. They stormed back in the fourth quarter, recovered an on-side kick, and won 28-24. They would carry that momentum into the next week.

“The win showed the resilience we had on that team. To come back from 24-7 and win was huge,” junior QB Keegan Smetanka said.

The Titans visited Plum in week 3, and were underdogs in the game. They certainly didn’t play like it. On the back of Cignetti and a turnover-hungry defense, the Titans blew Plum out 47-14.

After a loss to undefeated Hempfield, the Titans took on Franklin Regional in the homecoming game.

The game went back and forth, and both offenses



Titans RB Luke Cignetti carries the ball against Pine Richland.

looked unstoppable. Junior wide receiver Joey DeSabato looked unguardable, and when the defense shifted its attention to him, junior WR Kaden Orga and junior TE Brandon London stepped up. The game went into overtime where both teams scored on their first drives. The Titans didn’t want to play for a second. They lined up to go for the two-point conversion and the win. Smetanka hit a wide open London in the back of the end zone for a 42-41 win.

““It was great to get a big win for the community,” London said, “It really helped to show the rest of the WPIAL that we were for real.”

Opening up section play, the Titans traveled to Woodland Hills to play in the storied Wolvarena. Everyone anticipated the Wolverines to win, as Shaler had never beaten Woodland Hills in school history.

After a back and forth game, Woodland Hills had possession with under a minute left in a tie game, 21-21. Their quarterback rolled out looking for a comeback route, but junior defensive back Kaden Orga picked it off. This gave the Titans a shot at win-

ning, and they took it. With 20 seconds left, Smetanka heaved one up to Joey DeSabato who came down with it, broke a tackle and waltzed into the end zone with 10 seconds remaining. For the first time ever, Shaler had defeated Woodland Hills by a score of 28-21.

“It was a huge win for us and for the program moving forward. It really set the tone for the rest of the season, and set us up 1-0 in section play,” Orga said.

That win stood out to Ryan as the best game of the year.

“I’d have to go with Woodland Hills because of what it meant to the program. We had never beaten them, and we did it in one of the most storied venues in WPIAL history, the Wolvarena,” he said.

The Titans had three tough matchups in a row, visiting North Hills and Penn Hills and hosting Pine Richland. In all three they battled hard, but lost all three and fell to 4-5 overall.

On senior night, Shaler hosted Fox Chapel. Whatever frustrations they were holding were let loose on the Foxes. It was a dominating performance that the Titans won by a landslide, 55-25.

QB Keegan Smetanka ended the season with 2,151 passing yards and 21 touchdowns. Sophomore linebacker Joe Rispoli led the defense with 75 tackles, 6.5 sacks, and had a nose for the ball forcing 2 fumbles, recovering 3, and a blocked punt TD.

The Titans had nine players receive post season accolades from Big 56. First teamers include Luke Cignetti, Joey DeSabato, and Brandon London. Keegan Smetanka, Kaden Orga, and Joe Rispoli were named to second team. Ethan Gross, Zach Hartung, and Dom Battaglia were honorable mentions.

“We’re in good shape for next year. We have a lot of talent and experience, and we’re looking forward to next season,” Ryan said.

## Boys golf team succeeds in very difficult section

by Jack Salego

The boys golf team at Shaler Area is a gift that keeps on giving. Last year, now-junior Joey Miller won the section championship. This year, he placed 13th in the WPIAL. He helped the team make the playoffs for the first time in over 20 years.

Coach Mr. Chris Catanese, assisted by Mr. Brad Stone, led the varsity boys to a 10-3 season. The boys joined a new WPIAL 3A section this year, and they fit right in.

“I had some expectations coming into the season that we could compete for a playoff spot but was not completely sure because we were placed into a new section this season,” Mr. Catanese said. “The new section contained Fox Chapel who won the State Championship two years ago and lost in a playoff last year, along with North Catholic who won the WPIAL last year in a lower division. We also needed to compete with Shady Side Academy and Hampton, so the prospects of finishing in the top two looked extremely difficult.”

They didn’t make it look difficult. They started the season with 216-197 and 274-202 wins against Pine Richland and Highlands Area respectively.

The Titans fell to Fox Chapel, with sophomore Jacob Crissman most notably ending the day with a 36.

Their most notable win came when the boys traveled to Pheasant Ridge Golf Club to defeat North Catholic. Junior Jake Kunc recalled this as the most exhilarating game of the season, posting a 42 that day.

Mr. Catanese also cited this as the most exciting match of the season.

“Beating undefeated North Catholic at their home course this year was a big moment for our team. This win put us in position to make the team playoffs and a chance to win the section,” Mr. Catanese said.

Miller ended the season in 13th in the WPIAL, Crissman ended the season in 17th place, and Kunc finished 27th.

Everyone knows that the future is bright for this team, with all three of these boys returning for the next year.

“Winning the section will be our number one team goal next year, and making the WPIAL Team Finals is close behind,” Mr. Catanese said.

## Seniors lead the way for girls tennis team

by Piper Keane

With the loss of 15 seniors, the upcoming athletes on the girls tennis team had their work cut out for them.

Challenged with an entire new line-up, the team managed to stay competitive throughout the season. Senior Elyza Wiles accepted the challenge as she became the No. 1 singles player. Competing at a very high level, Wiles represented the team well. Additionally, the senior became a significant leader to the younger players.

Seniors Natalie Ondo and Cami Kwiatkowski took up the No.1 doubles position. They too displayed competitiveness and leadership as they were quite successful. Additionally, senior Valentina Navas played both singles and doubles throughout the season.

“Our seniors gave us a chance and I’m so proud of how they performed,” coach Brian Duermeier said.

In addition, the roster proved to have some depth. Juniors Josie Wilkins and Paige Sigmund really developed as players this year. Both players will step up at the singles spots next year. During a match against a section oppo-



nent Butler, Wilkins and Sigmund had to step up to the No.1 and No.2 singles position. Unexpectedly faced with the challenge, the girls surprised Butler with their competitiveness.

Although the final record was 2-3, the team gained the confidence this season to flip those numbers for next season. With the team putting in the work in the off-season, next year is looking bright for the team.

“The season was a challenge, but it was so much fun, and I am so proud to have been a part of such a great team,” Wiles said.



# Girls Volleyball success continues under new coach



The Titans set the ball in WPIAL playoff game

by Andrew Deal

The Shaler Area Girls Volleyball team had another very successful season. The team reached the WPIAL quarterfinals and finished 2nd in the section.

The team faced some challenges throughout the season. For one, they entered this year under a new coaching staff. Ms. Annie Bozzo took over the team as the head coach after coaching two years at Hampton.

Bozzo, a Shaler alumna, and 2021 Shaler Area Athletic Hall of Fame inductee for her career as a volleyball

player, coached the team to a 10-7 record. Bozzo’s accolades as a player are right up there with the best, and a big reason for becoming a coach. A team captain for all four years, two time All-WPIAL athlete, and a two time All-State Athlete were just some of the accomplishments she received throughout her career.

“After playing for Shaler Area, it was a dream come true to come back home and be the head coach,” Bozzo said.

Although there was no vertical movement in classifications for the team, they did move to another section

in Class AAAA.

“We had to scout new teams, we traveled farther for games, and we had to play some tough out of section matches as well,” Bozzo said.

One of these tough out of section matchups included rival and neighbor North Allegheny. Over the past two seasons, the teams have met a total of seven times. However, this season they only met once, in the regular season.

The team went through other hardships throughout the course of their season. They lost a key player, junior Hilary Quinn, early in the season due to an ACL injury, which forced many players to embrace new roles and an even bigger teamwork mentality.

“Coming down from such a successful previous year can be challenging in itself. Adding on a new coaching staff makes for transition challenges as well. The girls handled both with grace and worked hard to put themselves in the same position this year,” Bozzo said.

The Titans also had many memorable games and moments. They were

able to continue to make their presence known with another great run in the State College tournament. The team finished 2nd in their pool play, which entered them into the “power pools” bracket. Entering the day, they were using a brand new lineup, but they won their way into the quarterfinals where they just fell short to section opponent Hempfield.

“They accomplished our goal of getting better each set. We also had a great time bonding as a team. We had ice cream at The Creamery Friday night followed by bowling as a team where the girls got creative and had fun with it,” Bozzo said.

However, September 20, earlier in the season a five-set thriller against the eventual section winner Penn Trafford meant the most to the team.

“Going into the game, we knew they were going to be our biggest competition in the section. The game was very competitive and it was super rewarding to come out on top after a long hard-fought battle,” senior Candace Kozej said.

Shaler Area went on to the WPIAL playoffs and defeated Upper St. Clair in a fun, competitive first-round home matchup. However, the team would go on to lose in the next round to Pine Richland.

“My players work hard and make every practice and game fun. I look forward to keeping the program at the high level Coach Stadelman left it at,” Bozzo said.

# Girls soccer success about more than just wins

by Jack Salego

Another year has passed for the Shaler Area girls soccer program, but this year was different. The girls ended the season with a 5-12-1 record, improving upon their 3-13-1 record of last year. This wasn’t the only thing that improved, however. New senior leadership led the team to not only more wins, but also to create an even stronger bond between the girls.

Head Coach Mr. Bill Ament, assisted by Mr. Robert Yarnot and Sammy Bahorich, worked closely with seniors Ryann Dourlain, Anna Weaver, Catie Jordan, Haley Kistorick, Hannah Warren, Sydnee Cruz, and Maria Buckshaw to make the season count. This close-knit group led the rest of the girls with a passion for the game.



Freshman Caroline Dechek plays the ball in a game against Seneca Valley

“Not many coaches can say they coached a player for their first game as a seventh grader and also their last game as a senior. I am privileged enough to say I did for a great group of kids,” Mr. Ament said.

The girls soccer season opened up with North Allegheny beating the Titans 6-2 in a tough loss. A goal from junior Lexi Tylenda and another from sophomore Lia Wallander showed promise for the season going forward.

The Titans immediately bounced back from their first loss when they traveled to Allderdice and beat the Dragons 2-1. This would be the first section win of the season, a feat that wasn’t achieved last year.

“My favorite match of the season was our win against Allderdice. It was our first section win of the

season and a memorable one,” Kistorick said.

This wouldn’t be the only section win, however. The Dragons stepped onto Shaler’s home turf for senior night. Just 20 seconds into the match, Warren drilled a ball into the net from outside of the 18, the only goal of the night from both sides. The close game was a big win for all of the girls and especially for the seniors.

The team wasted no time building off this momentum, with the next match being against section rival North Hills. The first battle against them ended in a loss, but this time the Titans defeated the Indians, 3-1.

While they might seem like small accomplishments, those wins did not go unnoticed. Those wins helped Coach Ament earn the award of Coach of the Year in section 1 of the 4A.

One of the things that Mr. Ament had to work around was a bunch of injuries.

“We lost three of our four starting defenders for more or less the rest of the season when we played Fox Chapel. That hurt bad. Maria Buckshaw was our starting Center Back and brought a calm and safety net to our defense. Piper Keane was the best Fullback in the section until her season ending injury. Losing players like them forced a lot of younger girls into the spotlight and put them in positions they don’t usually play. Players like Bri Lucas, Caroline Dechek, Natalie Evangelista, and Maddie Primis played out of position all season but gave everything they had on that field,” Mr. Ament said.

The steps that the team took this season are just the beginning of turning girls soccer at Shaler Area into a winning program.

“To me the season was successful compared to years in the past. This team was very close and we seniors made sure we built the culture for years to come,” Kistorick said.

The 4A section is never easy, but this was a great year for them without a question.

“Now that the season is over, we can look back and see all the good we did this year. We finished the year with more section wins than we had in 10 years. We had more overall wins than the last four years combined. Most importantly we brought some fun and energy back to the program. I can’t wait to see what’s in store for the years to come,” Mr. Ament said.



# PowderPuff game a success in many ways



The senior girls celebrate their 8-7 PowderPuff victory.

by Aly Poliziani

This year’s PowderPuff game proved to be successful in more ways than one. From the money raised to the encouragement heard from the stands, the annual fundraiser gave students and families the opportunity to showcase their support for the player and a worthy cause.

For starters, the community was able to come together to raise an impressive total of \$1,618 at the gate from ticket sales and donations. Therefore, each organization- the Susan G. Komen and the Breast Cancer Research Foundation- will receive \$809.

Both the junior and senior class were also rewarded for their fundraising efforts, with the juniors receiving \$290 from their bake sale and the seniors earning \$203 from their 50/50 raffle.

After a hard fight, the senior class was ultimately able to come out on top with a score of 8- 7. The winning touchdown was scored by Savannah Yount followed by a two- point conversion run by Anaya Womack, which ensured the team’s victory.

“The senior girls played an amazing game,” coach Ben Yeckel said.

Despite the girls’ rocky start, the team’s defense managed to make a remarkable comeback with the help of calls made by seniors Auggie Tortorea and Tristan Holland.

Girls from both teams commented on how enjoyable the overall event was from a player’s perspective.

“PowderPuff was a really fun experience! It allowed me the opportunity to play football with friends for a fundraiser, and that is something remarkable,” senior Alexandra Scherrah said.

# Girls enjoy golf season despite record

by Andrew Deal

The girls golf season has come to an end. Although the team struggled to pile up wins, their focus was more on their individual improvements.

“We all improved our individual scores throughout the season. We worked as a team to help each other improve using our own strengths and weaknesses,” senior Jordan Geidel said.

The team learned to enjoy the presence of each other and the other teams on the course.

“I loved how nice everyone on the other teams were! Everyone was

so easy going and overall it was a fun environment on the course,” senior Taylor Scherer said.

They went out every match and looked to improve themselves and help others improve their scores, too.

“I enjoyed being able to play one last season with such a great team,” Scherer said.

They team was able to still compete individually for the WPIAL Qualifiers at the end of the season.

“My favorite part of the season was going to individual WPIAL qualifiers and meeting so many new friends and seeing old friends from other schools,” Geidel said.

# Boys soccer battles in section play against all four WPIAL semi-finalists

by Paige Sigmund

The Shaler Area Boys Soccer team wrapped up its season and finished with a record of 9-11. Even though the team’s record was below .500, that does not represent the commitment that the boys displayed this season.

Going into the season, the boys knew that they would be up against some of the best in the WPIAL, but the Titans held their own against those teams, win or lose.

Head coach Tyler Schultz told me that his favorite game of the season was actually a loss from the very beginning of the season.

“Our first game of the regular season against North Allegheny,” he said.

The game was at home at Biles Field, but the Titans lost by one goal with the final score of 3-2.

“It was early on, but this was a signal that we were here to battle this season,” Schultz said.

Pine Richland, another section rival who ended up as the class 4A WPIAL champions, beat the Titans twice, but only by a score of 2-1 each time.

Though the boys may not have won as many games as they would’ve liked, the way that they battled every game showed the character of the team.

“In such a tough section, which made up the entire semi-final round of playoffs, it is a step in the right direction for Titan Soccer,” Schultz said.

Schultz said that this senior class holds a special place in his heart. He admires the chemistry and bonds that they have built as a team.

He views them as great people on and off the field and hopes that the underclassmen will look up to and see them as role models.

Joshua Jashinski said that his favorite memory from this season was after the last day of preseason, when the entire team had breakfast after morning practice, ate eggs, and played basketball together. He said that joining boys’ soccer is like “joining your own little community.”

The boys ended the season on a high note by winning their last two games: an 8-0 win against Hempfield and then a 3-2 overtime win against Hampton.

# Cross Country team finds success in different ways



by Matt Purucker

The 2022 cross country season came to a close on October 27 with the Titans competing at the WPIAL Cross Country Championships. Despite the rain, the team persevered just like they did throughout the whole year.

In the words of the head coach Mr. Shawn Ryan, they were a “small but mighty group.” Having only seven girls and three boys, the ten athletes developed a close bond. However, because of the low numbers on the boys team, the Titans were not able to field a complete five-man team needed to place at meets.

For having such a small group, the Titans were especially successful at the Bald Eagle Invitational where their dedication was rewarded.

“We were able to run our team in the JV race, both boys and girls; we came out with some successes. We had kids get up on the medal stand. Cheyenne Sahr took first in the girls race,” Ryan said. “So, it was a pretty good accomplishment. The team bonded and just enjoyed the day in itself.”

Despite those achievements, the team suffered setbacks when it lost three of its ten members to injury. Harrison Repko, a senior, was extremely disappointed that a foot injury ended his final season before it had even started. That dropped the boys team from three to two runners.

Those injuries did not lower the Titans’ morale. The idea of getting better each and every meet was the driving force behind the team’s success this year.

“The last week of practice I asked the kids what their goals were going into the WPIAL Championship, and the consensus was to do better from the week before because we ran on the same course two weeks in a row,” Ryan said.

At the end of the season, the team found that while chasing medals and trophies was a noble pursuit, building relationships with teammates was a great byproduct of the year as well.

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