

# The Oracle

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## Art students again part of The Memory Project

Portraits will be on display this week at Shaler North Hills Library as part of fundraiser

by Alexa Stewart

The Art 3 and AP art students all participated in the Memory Project this year. The Memory Project is a non-profit organization that sends images of children from different countries to schools for students to paint portraits from the images and then send the portraits back.

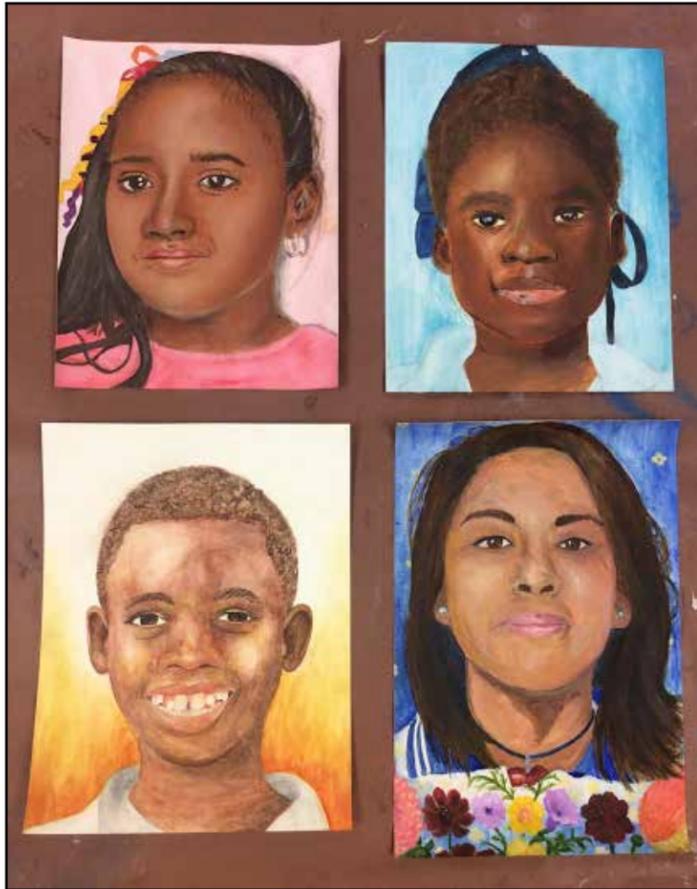
The children come from less than ideal situations and most of these children don't have many material possessions or things to call their own.

The paintings that are sent allow those children to have a portrait of themselves and gives them something to look at to cherish. It also lets them know that someone in the world cares about them enough to capture and recreate a certain image from their lives.

This makes a difference to not only the children being painted, but also a difference to the artists themselves. When painting the children, it allows the students to learn about someone that lives a life many can't even begin to imagine.

It really resonates with the artists and allows them to see how lucky they are to have the things that we sometimes take for granted. The children painted wake up every day wondering when their next meal is going to come from and are, in some cases, living in constant fear.

The children face many challenges such as violence, disasters, extreme poverty, neglect, and the loss of par-



Four of the portraits created for The Memory Project

ents. The paintings allow them to see that they are cared about enough to be replicated.

"The memory project was something amazing we got to do. Most of the studio art students had the ability to give a child in poverty something to keep forever. Knowing it always makes the children's day when they receive the painting of themselves makes it completely worth it," senior Alexis

Grau said.

This year Shaler Area received children from three different regions, Haiti, Mexico and Syria. In the past the portraits have been sent to places like Uganda, Syria, Jordan, India, and Nicaragua. Each student was assigned a child to replicate and all of the artworks came out really well this year. So well, in fact, that there is an art show that art teacher, Mr. David Boyles, set up at the Shaler

North Hills Library.

The event is being held from Monday, December 11 through Friday, December 15. This is an important event to help offset the cost since each artwork sent back to the organization costs \$15.

The portraits aren't being delivered until the spring, but Boyles had his students complete the projects over the last month. When asked why he chose to have the projects be done now

instead of later in the year his answer was simple: It's the season.

"It's the time of the year. The season of Thanksgiving, the season of Christmas. Plus to make sure we get all of them done and done well so they can be revisited if necessary so we can give our true best to someone else. It offers an opportunity for researching just beyond your local area and understanding just how blessed you are and working to better someone else's life using artistic means," Boyles said.

One of the most rewarding parts of this project is in the end, when the children receive the portraits, it is filmed and then the videos are then sent back to the schools for the students to watch. Unfortunately there are sometimes some events that prevent the portraits of being delivered.

"The only bad story I can think of is that the Lord's Resistance Army took some of the kids one year so they never received their work. All of the stories are good otherwise," Boyles said.

Boyles doesn't only enjoy seeing the children receive the portraits, he also enjoys seeing his students participating in a selfless service.

"(I enjoy) being able to watch students do something outside of themselves for someone else and to see the pleasure the students get from watching the pictures get delivered. I really, really care about the aspect of giving and serving someone other than yourself. Especially at this time of the year," Boyles said.

## The life of a school nurse is anything but boring

by Madison Tarlo

Students may think of school nurses as just people who provide simple medicine and make sure you're feeling okay before sending you home or back to class, but the life of a school nurse is much more complex than that.

Although for Shaler Area's Mrs. Leslie Scheuer, life here is not as complex as what she got to deal with when she worked in a hospital with heart transplant patients.

"When I worked in the hospital, I worked with heart transplant patients. Usually the surgeon takes out the diseased heart and replaces it with a donor heart, but in some cases the original heart remains and the surgeon attaches the donor heart. It's called a heterotopic transplant. I had a 16-year-old boy with two hearts, his old heart and his donated heart. He had two separate heartbeats, and on his EKG, you could see the activity of both hearts," Scheuer said.

Needless to say, there are a few differences between life as nurse in a hospital and in a high school.

"(In hospitals) people are sicker, and normally there's a diagnosis for it. In high school, kid's aren't always that sick, some just need a little boost to get through the day, so they come to lay down," Scheuer said.

Two things that kids don't usually go to the nurse

for are mints and crackers, but most students who visit the nurse seem to end up with one or both of these "treats" and then criticize or joke about the fact they received a mint and/or crackers. Actually there are reasons why these have become nurse's office staples.

"The peppermint breaks up bubbles in your stomach, because of the oil that's inside of them. Giving students crackers just puts something in their stomach, (which can help) if they're feeling sick or have a headache."

Often school nurses are called on to provide much more than mints and crackers. Scheuer and her colleagues have seen lots of things that are peculiar within the school environment.

Scheuer recounted a story from a friend of hers, a nurse at a different school, who would see blood scattered through the hallway in the school. Finally, they figured out a boy in the school had shoes that were ripped and torn on the bottoms of both shoes.

His parents couldn't afford new shoes or socks so, the boy would wear his shoes, without socks, and the bottom of his feet would bleed every day. Staff members bought the boy new shoes and socks. The bloody footprints came to end.

Scheuer has had some of her own interesting stories to tell.



School nurse Mrs. Leslie Scheuer

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# OPINIONS

## Gun control issue can no longer be ignored

by Maura Fisher

On Sunday, November 6th, 26 people were killed at a church service in Sutherland Springs, Texas. The shooter, 26-year-old Devin Kelley, previously had charges against him for assaulting his wife and child, was released from the military, and had misdemeanor charges for animal neglect and cruelty. Despite all of these red flags, Kelley was still somehow able to acquire a gun. I think that's absolutely disgusting. We need to change the way we think about guns. We need stricter control.

As of December 5, there were 326 mass shootings in the US just this year. For clarification, a mass shooting is a shooting where more than one person is killed or injured. Over 13,000 people have been fatally shot. That number sickens me and the fact that it means nothing to some people terrifies me.

Mass shootings are not the only problem that guns cause. The New York Times Upfront magazine stated that 31% of gun related deaths were homicide and 67% were by suicide. According to the US Department of Justice, 60% of all adult suicides are by firearm. Suicide rates could be lowered if these guns weren't available to them.

Compared to other developed countries, the amount of gun related deaths in the United States is absurdly high. It is more likely for a person to be struck by lightning than it is to be fatally shot in Japan. For the record, about one in every 10 million people are struck by lightning. In England, the likelihood of being shot is equal to the likelihood of dying



by falling off a ladder. In other words, not very likely. In the US, there have been almost 57,000 gun related incidents this year, and over 14,000 deaths .

Despite the statistics, some Americans continue to point to the 2nd amendment, which I think is misinterpreted.

The amendment was added to the Constitution because at the time, recently independent Americans were worried that the British would try to take over. If the Constitution was written to day, this law would surely not be ratified.

Other countries with stricter gun laws have much lower gun homicide rates because these countries recognize what causes gun homicides: guns. It's honestly that simple, and the proof is there. How many more people have to die before we realize that?

Regardless of how strict the background check-

ing to buy a gun is, the wrong people still somehow end up with them. Buying from a supplier at a federal regulated store is only one way to get a weapon. Even this isn't foolproof because who's to say that this buyer isn't getting the weapon for somebody else.

The background checks search for things like criminal records and mental illnesses, but what if you had a criminal record before you turned 18? What if you have an undiagnosed mental illness? These background checks have problematic holes. Literally anybody could walk into a gun show and leave with a gun. It's just too easy.

I just can't understand why we as Americans are so protective over a thing that was designed to kill. People will always argue self defense, but what do we

need to defend ourselves from? People with guns? Something here seems easily avoidable to me.

After every mass shooting, it's "too soon" or "not the right time" to talk about the issue of gun violence. When is the right time? After another Sandy Hook Elementary where over 20 people, the majority of them being 7 years old, were killed at their own school? If the slaughter of children isn't even enough to convince people that we need stricter gun laws, I'm terrified to find out what is.

Creating stricter gun laws or even flat out banning the usage of firearms would be nothing but beneficial for the United States. I understand that the right to bear arms is in the Constitution, but I also understand that it's not 1790. The times have changed and so should our laws.

## Grades and test scores should not define us

by Gabi Girton

Throughout high school, numbers matter. Whether it's in the form of GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, or other things that plague the minds of high school students, numbers end up defining us. These numbers do carry significance since colleges and trade schools may look at them. However, letting these numbers identify you is problematic.

Students end up getting so obsessed with numbers like class rank and GPA that they forget the important parts of high school, like learning skills to better prepare them for life. Instead of genuinely learning material, students are more likely to cheat their way into a better grade. Instead of actually comprehending lessons, students memorize the facts that will be necessary for exams, and then promptly forget them. This cycle does not aid in helping students learn lifelong skills that will be needed for life after high school.

Since colleges and universities put such a high emphasis on these numbers, students push everything else to the wayside. Although several teachers have tried to lessen this view, it ultimately proves unsuccessful.

For example, a teacher of an AP class I am in this year told us that it was 'OK' to not get an A in his class, and that learning the material was much more important, especially since we were all preparing to take the national AP exam at the end of May. However, I completely ignored this. As much as I wanted to do well on the exam, I was much more concerned with what was on the transcript at the end of the year. Since many colleges I am applying to require mid-year grades, I wanted to make sure that they were in good shape.

However, when the end of the first nine weeks rolled around and I saw a low B on my report card, I found myself insanely frustrated. I was putting so much effort into this class, and consistently did poorly on the tests and quizzes. Sure, I was actually learning, but I really didn't care. My grades reflected a number, and I let that number become more important to me than any of the material we were focusing on.

Students also take classes that they know they can receive the esteemed "A" in. Rather than challenging themselves in a tougher class that would be better for them in the long run, they take classes that are below them to ensure good

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## Social media fun being ruined by negative use

by Alexa Stewart

Social media has become a major influence in teenagers lives over the past decade. Teens spend all day constantly snapping, tweeting, posting and sharing parts of their everyday lives. Looking at fun fitness accounts, sending goofy filters to your friends and watching food videos are all fun parts of social media to experience everyday. That's what social media was made for. It was made to be a fast, fun way to get through everyday life.

While it's a major part of students' days, that doesn't necessarily make it a good thing. There are still many negative aspects of social media that can lead to serious issues in people's lives.

Bullying is a main factor that comes into play. An "innocent" picture that was "just a joke" could drastically change someone's life. One post on your page with constant retweets, shares, or likes can be permanently damaging as a human. Even if you take the picture down someone else could have taken a screenshot or saved the picture, meaning the picture exists somewhere else to be posted again.

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### 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.

# Goalie “in shock” after being named to All-State team

by Tanner Nowakowski

Senior Matt Potock joined an elite group of soccer stars when he was recently named to the Pennsylvania All-State team.

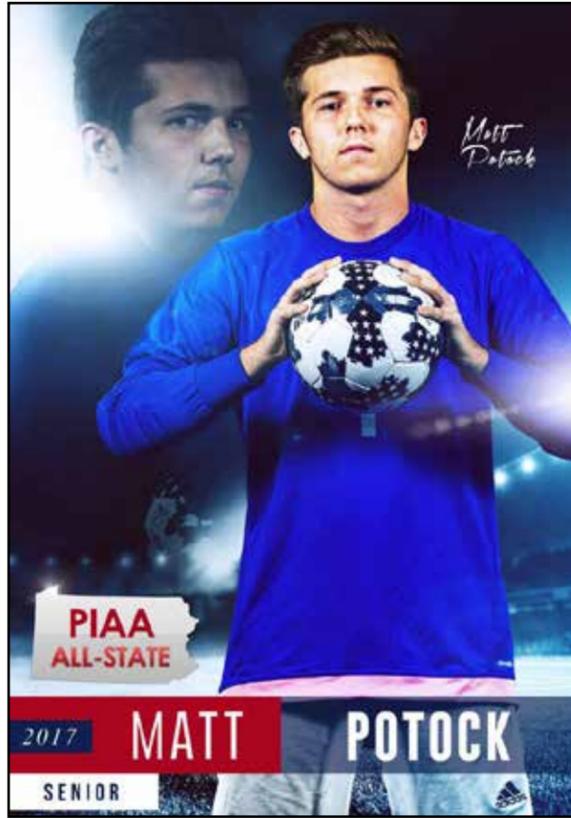
The Pennsylvania All-State team is a prestigious group of young soccer athletes, usually 11th and 12th grade students, that are noticed for their great teamwork and athletic ability. The Pennsylvania Soccer Coaches Association chooses these young soccer stars to be recognized as All-State athletes.

“When I first heard the news I was in shock and was so honored. Becoming All-State was one of my biggest goals this year and actually being able to achieve it was unbelievable,” Potock said.

Potock was recognized for his play at the goalkeeper position. He was a great asset to his team and his coach was very proud of his goalkeeper being added to the Pennsylvania All-State team.

“Matt was the best keeper on the field all season and made at least one highlight-reel save in each game. Usually these type of honors go to great keepers on great teams that don’t depend on the keepers like we did. For other coaches to recognize what Matt meant to this team was awesome,” his coach, Adam Hunter, said.

Potock has scholarship offers from Robert Morris, Waynesburg, California (PA) and Defiance College. Although he has not received an official offer from a University, Potock plans on attending



Duquesne University to play soccer. He has big plans and aspirations for his future in soccer and wants to continue to grow as a goalie.

“I would love to go to college and play soccer. Playing soccer is a different experience and I want

the challenge of playing at the highest level. My ultimate goal is to just be one of the best goalkeepers anyone has seen,” Potock said.

Soccer has been the main focus of Potock for many years. He has been working toward this goal of making the Pennsylvania All-State team ever since he was a young kid.

“Soccer has been my main sport ever since I could pretty much walk. It’s been my life for the better part of 15 years and the sport just means so much to me,” Potock said.

Potock’s drive to be better every time he steps onto the soccer field is driven by teammates and friendly competition.

“My inspirations for soccer are my brother and my friend Jake Jashinski. I see how good they are and they make me push myself to be better than them,” Potock said.

His friends joined the school soccer team and Potock wanted to do what his friends were doing. He just wanted to have fun with his friends and he ended up becoming one of the best players on the team.

“My friends got me into playing soccer. All of my friends were playing when we were younger and I didn’t want to get left out, so I joined the team,” Potock said.

From just having fun with his friends to becoming one of the most recognized soccer players in Shaler Area, Matt Potock has earned his spot on the Pennsylvania All-State soccer team.

## Seniors win exciting Powderpuff game

Game raises \$2,600 for Susan B. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research



Senior team celebrates its Powderpuff victory

by Jake Newport

Shaler Area’s annual Powderpuff game was held on November 21. The game was an intense matchup featuring junior and senior girls facing off against each other on the football field. After losing last year’s game as juniors, the seniors got a taste of victory with a 12-7 victory over the juniors.

The game started off with an impressive drive by the juniors, but they failed to come away with any points. This trend continued for the majority of the first half for both sides until late in the first half when senior Natalie Albinger broke through the junior defense for a long rushing touchdown. They went for a two-point conversion and failed the attempt so, at the end of the half the score was 6-0.

It seemed that the seniors suffocating defense would hold up for a shutout until the middle of the second half, when Meghan Balkey scored a touchdown for the juniors, who made the extra point to take a 7-6 lead over the seniors.

“It was such an exciting feeling because all week we were told that this is a game where the seniors were supposed to win; being in the lead for that little bit proved that we did have that game and it was exciting to have that possibility of win-

ning a game in favor of the seniors,” junior Lydia Valentine said.

After the juniors scored, the seniors answered immediately with another touchdown of their own. Again, it was Natalie Albinger with another long run to give the seniors a 12-7 lead. After this score she took a page out of Le’veon Bell’s book with a bench press celebration.

“I don’t know how to describe it in words. It was an amazing feeling. I was looking forward to doing that celebra-

tion all game, so I was super excited to be able to actually do so.” Natalie Albinger said.

However, the juniors did not go away quietly, as they began to move the ball downfield with the clock running down. Penalties hampered their progress and the senior defense forced a turnover on downs.

Once they had the ball, all the seniors had to do was milk the clock and let it run until it hit zero. That is exactly what they did and they completed their 12-7 victory over juniors.

While the seniors get to hold the bragging rights, this game is for a charitable cause. The powderpuff game benefits the Susan G. Komen Foundation for Breast Cancer Research. It normally attracts 100-300 people to attend and raises anywhere from \$2000 to \$3000. This year the game was right on track with those numbers by raising \$2600 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

“It is truly a great night to have our girls on the gridiron. Even though they are in pink, they show that they are tough playing a ‘man’s’ game. The crowd is cheering and we all are working towards a world without lives lost to breast cancer – both women and men,” Activities Director Ms. Mindy Thiel said.

## Social Media

### issues

from page 2 —

Suicide is one of the most serious side effects of bullying on social media. Unfortunately, cyberbullying is prominent today, especially with adolescents and teens. People start to question their worth when more and more individuals continue to bully them online and offline. If no one catches or stops this from happening, it can lead to depression and in some cases even cause people to take their own lives.

There’s also the factor of how people’s location is usually included in every post on Instagram and their location is included on the Snapmap on Snapchat. Sometimes, even strangers can use this to their advantage and find people wherever they are. If these strangers are criminals such as child abductors or sex offenders then this can be a very dangerous thing.

Privacy settings are a vital part to safety on social media. If the privacy settings aren’t turned on, and something gets posted, someone who might not have the best intentions could do something terrible. There have been cases of this that have happened before. Kidnappings have happened where people have been peering social media accounts

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# “Sleepy Hollow” works out for all

by Tanner Nowakowski

Shaler’s comedic twist to “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” proved to be a big success as the show attracted over 1,200 people.

The cast was a bit nervous about how the audience would react to their different, comical take on the play, but everyone noticed that the audience had a positive response.

“I was afraid that sometimes people wouldn’t laugh at some of the stuff and only we would find it funny, but the audience seemed to enjoy it,” senior Jake Bartosh, who played Mr. Van Tassle, said.

The play was almost flawless, but unfortunately during the first showing of the play a platform broke as an actor stepped on it. The actors and crew handled the mishap perfectly and it did not take away from the amazing show that was put on by the skilled performers.

“This play was so different from any of the last ones we’ve done, it was definitely my favorite play,” senior Zach Reed, who played Brom Bones, said.

The cast even had some star moments as people who enjoyed the play were waiting for them outside asking for pictures.

“There were these three little boys waiting right outside of the stage doors, it was the most adorable thing,” senior Andrew Lesnett, who played Ichabod Crane, said.

The play was such a huge success, everyone involved in the play did their best to put on a family friendly and fun show for the audience.

“All of our cast members gave their all. We cannot do a production of this caliber relying on only principal roles. We need everyone! The seniors provided extraordinary leadership and will leave a part of themselves behind with the underclassmen they have inspired,” Director Mrs. Anne Loudon said.



Seniors Jake Bartosh and Andrew Lesnett in “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

# Grades should not define us

from page 2

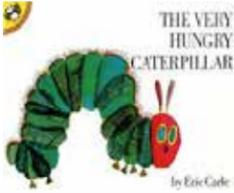
grades. This applies to both core classes and elective classes. I know so many people who have taken classes solely because they know they’ll get a good grade in the class.

This mentality is hurting students academically. Students resort to easy methods to getting points. They put more effort into copying homework instead of actually taking time to do the lesson.

When students are only focusing on grades, GPA, class rank and test scores, they end up spending more time worrying about numbers than focusing on becoming a person with good character. When students start to base their self-worth on percentages, it becomes very easy to start feeling less than adequate.

Students defining themselves only by numbers is a mentality that is hurting high school students, and unfortunately, there isn’t a known remedy. No matter what people or teachers say, students will still focus on test scores and grades as opposed to learning materials. While caring about grades isn’t a bad thing, obsessing over them is.

Most importantly, students need to remember that they are so much more than grades and scores. People offer so much more to the world that happens outside of schooling. Being kind, being involved in your community, and developing positive morals and good character are things that should be valued much higher than an ACT score.

THE GRID		Only one Christmas gift for the rest of your life...	Predictions for amount of snow this winter..	A book you wish you could read for the first time again..	Food you’ve never eaten, but would really like to try?	Fill in “_____” and “_____”
<b>Cara Roth</b>		<b>Capybara</b> 	<b>Very little... it makes me very sad</b>	<b>To Kill A Mockingbird</b>	<b>Sushi</b> 	<b>Turkey &amp; Stuffing</b>
<b>Lydia Valentine</b>		<b>love, man</b> 	<b>None. Global Warming.</b>		<b>Crab</b> 	<b>Carrots and Peanut butter</b> 
<b>Adam Willard</b>		<b>A Fridge</b> 	<b>A lot</b> 	<b>The Night</b>	<b>Chowder</b> 	<b>Chopped and Kitchen</b>
<b>Sonny Demasi</b>		<b>An Electric Guitar</b>	<b>Big Snows</b> 	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird</b>	<b>Alligator</b> 	<b>Peanut Butter &amp; Jelly</b> 
<b>Ms. Christen Braun</b>		<b>Power of invisibility</b>	<b>Enough for some delays but no cancellations</b>	<b>Beasts of No Nation</b>	<b>Gumbo</b>	<b>Bert and Ernie</b> 

# SA grad goes from “Big Brother” house to classroom

by Gabi Girton

One of Shaler Area’s most recognized alumnus is Ian Terry, a 2009 graduate who ended up being the youngest person to win the game show ‘Big Brother’.

Following high school, Terry pursued a degree in Chemical Engineering from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Soon after enrolling in the University, Terry took a semester off to join the cast of Big Brother for the 14th season.

The casting directors of Big Brother were holding auditions nearby the Tulane Campus, and Terry, a longtime fan of the show, decided to audition.

“I thought to myself, ‘why not?’ One thing led to another, and three months later I was moving in,” Terry said.

Big Brother is a television reality game show which follows a group of contestants, known as HouseGuests, who are living together in a custom-built home under constant surveillance. The HouseGuests are completely isolated from the outside world and can have no communication with those not in the house. The contestants compete for a \$500,000 grand prize, with weekly competitions and evictions determining who will win the show.

Terry elaborated on his time in the Big Brother house, and although he won, he doesn’t necessarily think he would do the entire experience again.

“I really enjoyed it in the moment, but I would be hard pressed to do it again. I obviously can’t complain about the way the results turned out,” Terry said.

Along with being the youngest contestant to ever win the show, Ian also holds the record for most consecutive ‘Head of Household’ by winning the title four times. This allowed him to avoid being nominated for eviction until 62 days in. Terry ended



Ian Terry

up beating out his other competitors, and took his \$500,000 prize back home to Louisiana.

After taxes, the price ended up being \$300,000 which Terry put primarily towards his education.

“I spent the money on my student loans. Tulane isn’t cheap. It was actually a fun moment where I was sitting in the dorm writing this big check to pay off school loans. I also bought a car and I put a down payment on my house in Houston. I wanted to be smart about the way I spent the money,” Terry said.

Currently, Terry is using his degree in Chemical Engineering to teach an AP Physics class at YES Prep Public School in Houston, Texas.

Being a Big Brother Celebrity and a teacher gives school days an interesting dynamic for Terry.

“My students definitely know. When they got their new schedules with my name on it a lot of them looked me up. There were students who had actually watched the show. Every now and again a student will ask a question about it,” Terry said.

Overall, Terry says he enjoyed his time in the spotlight, but now is focusing more on teaching than his reality career.

“It’s kinda random right? It’s at a point now where it’s kinda over though, TV fame is so fleeting, and my 15 minutes of fame has long passed,”

Terry gave some advice to current Shaler students based off his experiences with Big Brother, Tulane, and Teaching.

“You want to put a lot of thought into the High School courses you take in order to better set yourself up for success when you go into your college major. The biggest thing I’ve realized is that math is pretty much king, if you can do math you can do anything. Focus hard and study.”

## English Honor Society ready for first-year activities

by Gabi Girton

Starting this school year, Shaler Area will host a newly founded English Honor Society. The society was started by Sophomore, Michael Labella, and is being sponsored by Mrs. Anne Loudon.

Since this is the first year of Shaler Area’s chapter, the club is on a ‘test’ year, where the club will need to show growth, momentum, and activity before becoming an official chapter for the English Honor Society.

“I hated English in primary school, but as soon as I came to the high school, everything changed. I was inspired by a lot of my teachers,” Labella said.

This society is geared towards students taking an Honors or AP level English courses, who have maintained consistently good grades in English classes throughout their time at the high school. It will allow space for students to share, create, and improve their English skills through multiple activities and workshops.

“I am anticipating working with students in an environment where we can share our passion for language and literature and students do not have to stress about receiving a grade,” sponsor Anne Loudon said.

One of the first events that EHS is working on during the winter time is writing responses to ‘Letters For Santa’ written by the kindergartners at Burchfield. Over Thanksgiving break, the kids will send their letters in, and students in English Honor Society will write responses signed from ‘Santa’s Elves’. The letters will then be dusted with fake snow and handed back to the kindergartners before Holiday Break.

“I think it is a really cute way to involve some of the students in the primary schools, and I am really excited to see how the kids react,” senior Erika Spondike said.

The English Honor Society students also are volunteering with a variety of different district wide events. For example, students will help with the Titan Trail by making bookmarks to encourage students to keep reading, and help with the Titan Trail 5K in April.

There are different ways that students in EHS can get involved including attending weekly writing workshops, local theatrical performances, and local events like open-mic nights, poetry slams, and movie nights.

Students in the Honor Society will be able to participate in different English based events like field trips, and writing workshops. Labella hopes that after this ‘test’ year the society will make a lasting impact beyond his graduation.

“We have a strong community of writers and creative minds in this school. I am happy to help provide an outlet for that creativity,” Loudon said.

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# Domencic follows in family footsteps to education

by Brandon Kurzawski

Among Shaler Area High School staff, there are diverse personalities, some of which have interesting stories about how they came to Shaler Area High School. One such story is found in Mrs. Hillary Domencic, an 11th grade American Literature teacher, who has been a teacher at the High School for 16 years and provides a learning environment that encourages students to succeed.

Domencic grew up in Lawrenceville and later moved to North Allegheny where she graduated high school. She grew up in a generation of teachers, with her father and mother both being teachers. While attending Chatham University, she majored in English specifically focusing on American literature. Though her parents were both teachers, Domencic didn't always want to be a teacher.

"It was really the family business, but I just wasn't interested. I didn't think that was for me" Domencic said. "Because they were both in education, I felt there has to be more to life, other careers out there that I just don't know about. I wanted to be my own person and didn't want to just follow in their footsteps, and I didn't really; I came to teaching in a totally different path."

After college, she took on different jobs including working as a professional writer and being a research assistant, but Domencic, however, was really interested in traveling, so she took on a job teaching English as a second language in Japan for a year just because she wanted to live in Japan.

While in Japan, Domencic couldn't speak Japanese, but mentioned how supportive everyone was through the language barrier.

"They were patient and really tried to understand what I was trying to say. Other people's patience and willingness to make sense of what I was saying is basically how I got by," Domencic said.

Domencic has also lived in Belize. From there, she traveled around Central America and eventually found a job working as a travel writer in Venezuela where she wrote about Venezuela for Fodor's travel guide.

She has also been to several different countries including Tanzania where she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

Following her experience in Japan, Domencic was a book store manager for a few years. Though the Japan trip was meant for travel, Domencic fell in love with teaching in the process.

"When I came home, I really missed it; I missed



Mrs. Domencic and her daughter Vera.

teaching. I realized that I loved teaching by teaching. I feel as if I never had that experience, then I probably wouldn't be a teacher because it's something I had to try to realize how much I loved it," Domencic said.

After working as a manager of a book store for a few years, Domencic went back to Duquesne University to get her MS in teaching. She finished her degree and started working at Shaler Area High School when she was 28.

Although Domencic currently isn't involved in any after school activities besides taking care of her daughter, she noted being involved with extracurricular activities such as the play, Forensics Team and Book Club have helped her grow and see students as individuals rather than just students.

"I think that those experiences in the past trained me to see students as people and not just as students, as whole people. I think that those experiences definitely helped me to perceive people as well rounded individuals to see beyond how they might perform in my class and understand that they have a whole life," Domencic said.

Students who have had Domencic or currently

have her always mention the happy, effervescent person she always stands to be.

Senior Alexa Stewart had Domencic last year for American Literature and mentioned the constant good vibes Domencic gives to her students.

"She was such an amazing teacher. She always greeted everyone with a smile on her on face. No matter what kind of day I had, she always ended it on a good note," Stewart said.

Being cheerful to everyone isn't work to Domencic because she loves what she does as an educator.

"I love my job, and when you really love what you do, you don't have to make an effort to be happy because you're just happy," Domencic said.

She loves teaching because of things being different every day with different interactions each day with students.

"If I just came in every day and taught the same material I've taught every year, that could be really boring and I think I could just get into a monotonous routine. What makes it wonderful is that I have different students every year, so it can't be the same class because there are different people in front of me and that's really the thrill of teaching," Domencic said.

## Ecology Club sponsoring marker recycling program

by Madison Tarlo

Over the past several years, the Ecology Club has sponsored a recycling event. They've recycled K-Cups, Batteries, and last year they recycled the plastic blister packs that contact lenses are packaged in.

GATE teachers Mrs. Kathleen Edler and Mrs. Christina Palladino, who are also the sponsors of the Ecology Club, are encouraging people to recycle markers.

The program is called Crayola ColorCycle. Not only can Crayola markers be collected, but also any kind or brand of marker, such as dry erase markers, or highlighters. The point of these programs is to help kids understand the importance of protecting the environment.

Mrs. Palladino heard about the program through her children's elementary school.

The markers are sent to a facility where they are transformed into clean,

burning fuel. The fuel can be used to power vehicles, heat homes, and can also be used for cooking meals.

The markers will be collected at the end of February. A district wide email was already sent that required faculty and staff to begin collecting the used markers. The central collection bin for the high school will be located in the activities office. Each teacher was asked to create a spot in their classrooms to collect the markers, and then all of the markers will be gathered up at the end of the month and sent to Crayola.

There's not a clear number on how many markers go into landfills, but most dried up markers end up in landfills instead of being recycled.

Recycling markers makes fuel that heats homes, allows people to have running cars and helps cook food. Instead of throwing away markers that don't work anymore, collect them and recycle them.

## Social media issues

from page 3

around them and have gone to a certain event and snatched people up.

There are people that "catfish" young individuals when someone that uses a different identity on social media to influence others to think they are someone they aren't. This has been in the news with older men pretending they're teenage guys. They plan a meet up and then abduct young girls or boys and abuse or even kill them.

While many teenagers can't control most of these things, there is one issue of social media that can be controlled: sexting. Snapchat is a main platform for this due to people believing their images will just disappear, but pictures meant for a specific person get screenshotted and sent to others.

What many students don't understand is that this is a serious offense. Any sharing of a nude photograph is legally considered possession and distribution of child pornography. The dispersion of child pornography is a second degree felony in Pennsylvania and can be punishable for up to 5-10 years in prison and would result in the offender being put on a sex offender list. An "innocent" sharing of a picture as a minor can cause all of these intense repercussions that will last for the next 40+ years.

Granted, not everyone abuses social media in these ways. Social media can be a good tool to be used in multiple aspects of many people's lives. Social media is a large responsibility in a way, whether people know it or not. The things they post and do have an impact on those around them, some larger than could ever be imagined.

# Food drive assists Bread of Life pantry



by Brandon Kurzawski

Throughout the second week of November, Shaler Area High School hosted its annual food drive to benefit the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Etna. This year, over 900 items were collected from 9th period classes.

At the Calvert Memorial Presbyterian Church in Etna, the Bread of Life Food Pantry benefits over 150 families in the 15223 and 15215 zip codes. Every year, Shaler Area High School hosts a Food Drive among the classes to help with donations. The food drive has been going on in the high school for more than 30 years with at least 17 years benefiting the Bread of Life Pantry.

Alexis Weber, a Shaler Alumna, is the manager of the Bread of Life Food Pantry where she volunteers with other community members to provide food to families that are in need of help.

“Our volunteers are deeply committed to providing the most caring experience for our families and readily welcome students needing to complete community service projects and others who just want to volunteer,” Weber said.

“Shopping Days” are provided to the families in need of help to come and visit the Food Bank. The family is given a shopping cart where they can choose from non-perishable items as well as a variety of other food items such as fresh produce, bread, eggs, cheese and meat. Shopping Days are held on Wednesdays three times a month.

With the closure of All Saints Food Pantry, the Bread of Life Food Pantry is expecting an increase in the numbers of families served each month, so donations through food drives and other sources are encouraged even more as time moves forward.

“While many churches keep our shelves filled through weekly donations and large food drives, we are constantly praying for more donations and food drives as the needs of our families continue to increase and social programs decrease,” Weber said.

# Life of school nurse is never boring from page 1

“During my first year here I saw a girl who showed me a cut on her foot. Her bedside lamp fell off the table. When it broke, it sliced into her foot. She wasn’t worried, though. She used sewing thread and a needle and sewed up her own foot,” Scheuer said.

Not all of the stories are “blood and guts” issues. Before coming to Shaler Area, Scheuer worked in a school that was just kindergarten through second grade. The classes we’re really big, and the students families didn’t have much, so the nurses and teachers made sure to do what they could to help anyone who needed it.

A little girl came into the nurse’s office with a loose tooth. Mrs. Scheuer told the girl to wiggle her tooth while Scheuer read a book to the girl. When they reached the last page, the girl’s tooth fell out.

Later that year, the girl told one of her friends who had a loose tooth to see the nurse. The girl’s friend asked her if Scheuer could read a story to her just as she did for her friend. Scheuer read to the girl’s friend as she wiggled her tooth, and when she reached the last page, the girl’s tooth fell out.

Here at the high school, the issues are a lot different than loose teeth, but the nurse’s office is still a place that kids seek out as a safe haven at times. Scheuer said there are plenty of people who visit not for anything but a break.

Scheuer is happy to provide a place for them to take a break from the anxiety or depression they feel during the day.

“School can be a stressful place for students. Some students just need a timeout during their day to take a break from the stress they feel. I would rather have them come to my office or to the Guidance Office for a break than get into trouble when they cannot control their emotions,” she said.

Some of that may be related to the fact that Scheuer has noticed a steady increase in the number of students who are dealing with mental health issues.

“I am seeing more and more students each year with mental health concerns, such as anxiety or depression,” Scheuer said.

Nurses are faced with the unexpected everyday. The nurses here at Shaler Area High School, go above and beyond to make sure all of the students get the best care they can to have a good learning experience.

Nurses have to be ready for everything. Scheuer never knows what the day’s will bring her, but she loves that’s part of what makes her job appealing.

“It’s great because I have a new story every night,” she said.

While her stories are never the same, her advice to students always is.

“Be prepared, eat your breakfast, and get your sleep.”



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