

# The Oracle

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## Jackson brings diverse background to SRO role

by Stephanie Bodner

The Shaler Area School District has made it known that security in its schools has become a number one priority. This year, along with a few more security guards, another police officer was added to our staff. Officer Brennan Jackson was added to the staff as a student resource officer to help current student resource officer Frank Spiker.

Jackson is no stranger to patrolling the streets, but finds the halls of the Shaler Area School District a little more unfamiliar.

The types of cases on the day to day are always changing.

“More than anything I take corrective measures, I don’t really run into anything too serious,” he said.

Although that may be the case here, Jackson has seen and been trained to handle situations much worse. Jackson started his police career in lower income areas of Pittsburgh.

“You see more severe cases in low income areas, my first day on the job I was immediately put into the middle of it all, I was patrolling when a call for a shooting came over the radio,” Jackson said.

Jackson remained in these areas for some time. His experiences have shaped him into the person he is today. Jackson is not the first in the family that has pursued work in the police area.

His father was a state police officer and now does work in the security field at hospitals in the Pittsburgh area, and his uncle was also a police officer.

A police officer’s uniform was not always the uniform that Jackson saw himself in.

“I thought for the longest time that I would be doing something in the medical field, and went as far as attending Marshall University for biology, I completed school for a year before realizing that it wasn’t what I wanted to do anymore,” he said.

Jackson speaks about his time in the police academy highly, “The reality of the unwritten sister and brotherhood would make anyone feel privileged to be a part of it,” he said.

Jackson had the feeling that life had a lot more in store for him, which proved to be true when he became a father.



Officer Brennan Jackson

“My life is completely taken over by my son, we are constantly trying to keep him involved in an active life between basketball, football, family time, and playing video games together,” he said.

Following his father, uncle, and grandfather, Jackson’s son also hopes to be a police officer.

“He has a great relationship with my father.”

Finding the balance between having a job that requires utmost alertness while being a laid-back father is something Jackson can say he is successful at.

“The two actually complement one another, being a father has helped me in my field immensely and being a police officer has shaped me as a father.”

Jackson has slowly seen life mold into what he can now call his everyday routine.

“I met my wife when I worked at Children’s Hospital for six years, she was a PA. I used to walk certain ways just to see her. My wife has been extremely

supportive in everything, she’s my best friend. She doesn’t get too nervous when I leave for the day. My mother, on the other hand, is different.”

You don’t have to follow the news to be aware of how often police officers are seen in a negative light. Although, one may not think that being involved in police work with those at our age would be something that would involve the dark sides of today’s viewpoints.

“Everybody loves to be a victim now, most things heard in the media is a big misunderstanding. That’s why I like talking to the younger generations to try to form an unbiased opinion on law enforcement,” he said.

Jackson has a unique perspective, being a black man, while also being a police officer.

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## Students get up close look at Carlow cadaver lab

by Julia Falgione

Carlow University recently hosted Mr. Tim Taylor’s Honors Anatomy & Physiology students, and allowed them to view cadavers in the college’s labs. Professor Stephen Borecky served as a guide to Shaler’s students as he and his own students gave a sneak peek into their world of classes and their preparations for their future that included Borecky’s anatomy class.

Before the cadavers were examined, students observed two preserved human brains, one normal and one with Alzheimer’s. The difference between the two brains was that the normal brain was more compact together where the Alzheimer’s brain had fissures, the folds in the brain, that were very far apart.

The graduate students had finished their muscle practical that week, so all the muscles were exposed and the bodies were lacking skin and fat. There were two cadavers, a male and a female. It was a hands-on experience so, Shaler students were able to interact with the cadavers mostly any way they wanted. They were able to view their faces as well which also had muscles exposed.

The male cadaver died at about 90 years old. During his life, he had open heart surgery and we were able to tell through the metal staples that put his sternum back together after the surgery. He also had a pacemaker which was visible in his muscle tissue.

The female cadaver died in her 60s. The Shaler students were able to view the top of her heart, where her main arteries were in view. She was very overweight in her life, so the students showed in comparison her skin to her leg without fat.

She also experienced rigor mortis, which is when there is a stiffening of muscles after death. Her hand and arm were stuck in a bent position against her body.

The difference between the male and the female was shown through their muscles. The male had only muscles which were separated from his fat when they removed it. The female on the other hand had a mix of both fat and muscle, which is true for women alive as well. Men have more layered muscle and fat compared to women and have them more blended.

The cadaver lab in Carlow is used to teach students a more in depth understanding of human muscles, bones, organs and anatomy as a whole. Carlow students are able to actually see the parts and how they are connecting rather than just hearing about them in a classroom setting.

The Honors Anatomy students can opt to take the second part of the course for more college credits and will have the opportunity to go back to Carlow University. During that trip, the cadavers will be open so their organs will be visible for students to observe.

The trip was very educational and we were able to learn an abundant amount of information that we would not have been able to before. This trip helped validate those who have an interest in a medical future.

“The benefit of going on the Carlow trip is for students to be able to have direct, hands-on experience with a cadaver. Experiential learning helps to supplement theoretical work in class and it really helps students to relate some of the abstract concepts and physical components to something real,” Honors Anatomy teacher, Mr. Tim Taylor said.

# OPINIONS

## New tobacco law may make sense, but it doesn't mean I like it

by Max Robinson

On December 20th, 2019, President Trump signed legislation that raised the minimum age to purchase tobacco products from age 18 to 21. This happened pretty quietly, with many consumers and retailers unaware of the changes.

Of course, the 18-20 age group was irate and confused about the change. Many were able to legally purchase tobacco one day, and denied the next.

Why can I serve my country and die fighting for it at 18, but I'm not allowed to drink a beer or smoke a cigarette? Why am I openly encouraged to vote for my leaders who can change the lives of millions, but I can't smoke a stogie while I'm golfing? I am legally required to sign up for Selective Service, but apparently I'm not old enough to decide if I want to use tobacco or not.

In most other countries, including the vast majority of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the smoking age AND drinking age is 18. This is also the reason for the very high rate of binge drinking by US teens and young adults, but that's a story for another article.

The FDA did not include a grandfather clause, and it is unlikely that such a clause will be added. A grandfather clause applies the law over time while not affecting current groups. For example, if there was a clause for this law, all of those 18-20 before the change would remain unaffected while those underage would be affected. Before this new law was passed, individual states passed 21+ laws, but with grandfather clauses.

The reported reason for this sudden change was the outbreak of youth vaping. This doesn't equate to much sense. It has been illegal for years for anyone under 18 to buy tobacco. Instead of punishing the 18-20 group, make the penalties for underage smoking/vaping greater.

However, there is a flip side to this change. It has been proven with years of data that most smokers started before they turned 18. Many people turn 18 while they are still in high school, which allows them to purchase for their younger peers.

This has definitely been the case for years and it has transitioned into vaping, which has gotten teens more addicted to nicotine than ever before. By changing the age to 21, it prevents underage access a little more. There are many arguments on both sides of this new legislation, but I feel I'm caught somewhere in the middle.

The point is, I don't feel that 18-20 year olds should be punished for the actions of 13-17 year olds. I won't be completely ignorant, as I feel this legislation will definitely put a dent into the teen vaping epidemic. It will be interesting to see how this pans out over time.

## The Astros cheated and somehow got away with it

by Dominic DiTommaso

Don't worry, I didn't electronically steal someone else's column to write this.

Now let me tell you about a team that did steal something, signs to be precise.

The Houston Astros have been found guilty of using technology to steal signs from other teams in their home park which helped them win a World Series title in 2017.

It is a stain on baseball.

Just for the record, sign-stealing has been woven into the fabric of the great game for over 100 years. The sport is steeped in cheating.

The oldest mantra in the sport is "If you ain't cheatin', you ain't tryin'". It is a long tradition in this sport that teams try to get every edge they can. Alex Cora, who was just fired as the Red Sox manager, was raised in this sport seeing all of the cheating that was taking place. Now, he helped commission a new level of it.

We are in the age of electronic sign-stealing.

If a team is using technology to steal signs from the other team at tis home park, that team needs to be punished harshly.

Houston crossed a line that shouldn't have been crossed. Sign-stealing has been part of baseball for over a century, but electronic sign-stealing? That's completely different.

Commissioner Rob Manfred suspended Astros manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow for one year, while fining the franchise \$5 million and taking 1st and 2nd-round picks from the Astros for the next two years.

Back in 2017, there was an Apple Watch cheating incident involving the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, in which Brian Cashman, New York's baseball executive, cried foul and went to the league office claiming the Red Sox were cheating using technology. This led to Manfred releasing a blistering memo saying, "This will stop."

So, the Astros, and the rest of baseball, were warned, but after not

heeding that warning, they weren't punished harshly enough.

This scandal decided who played in the 2017 World Series. The Yankees played the Astros in the ALCS. The final score of both Game 1 and Game 2, both played in Houston, was 2-1 in favor of the home team. The Astros were cheating, and the Yankees lost by small margins.

When the series swung back to New York, the Yankees won 8-1, 6-4, and 5-0. When the games were back in Houston, the Astros won 7-1 and 4-0 to advance to the World Series.

The Yankees should have been in that World Series.

The \$5 million dollar-fine the Astros received is a non-factor for Houston. I understand that is the maximum limit allowed by the rules, but it doesn't affect Houston at all.

The amount of revenue the Astros have pulled in from the World Series win more than makes up for it, and the firing of Hinch and Luhnow allow them to make up that money.

The loss of draft picks isn't that big of a deal, because the Astros are still a good team and thus they will be picking at the end of the draft for the next few years.

There are discussions that some players on the Astros, including José Altuve, wore devices under their uniform that buzzed to tell them the pitch that was coming.

Just watch Altuve's walk-off home run against Aroldis Chapman in Game 6 of the 2019 ALCS and see what you think.

Did that maybe cost Chapman his postseason legacy? Maybe. Kind of how Houston might have cost Clayton Kershaw's and Dave Roberts their overall legacy because of cheating in the 2017 World Series.

Maybe the Astros caused the firing of Joe Girardi after failing to reach the World Series in 2017.

My opinion of the Houston Astros has certainly changed as this scandal has been exposed, and hopefully so has yours.

If it wasn't, come talk to me.

Better yet, go talk to Chapman, Kershaw or Girardi.

**We want to hear from you!**

*Have something to say?*

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

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

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

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

**The Oracle**

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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.

# OPINIONS

## Christmas is over. Don't worry. It won't be long until stores will start decorating for it again soon.

by Michaela Brining

There are many things that Americans love: football, fast-food, Oprah Winfrey, reality tv shows, guns, and peanut butter. However, there is nothing that Americans love more than holidays, especially Christmas.

Every year we gather around our plastic, car-freshener smelling, conifer trees and hold hands as we sway in a circle singing the words “ding dong”, “jing-a-ling” and “kumbaya”.

At the end of every December, Christians celebrate one of the most important holidays of their religion. Although Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, it has become much more than that. Over the years it has become so insanely commercialized that it's lost its true meaning.

No longer is it a holiday about religious beliefs and spending time with loved ones. Now it's become a money-making tactic for big businesses to earn profits. Christmas is about the presents. That's what it's about now: presents.

I am not the Grinch or Scrooge. I am nothing like the characters we see in Christmas marketing propaganda. My vendetta against Christmas isn't against the religious holiday itself, but by how twisted we've made it. Over a month later, I am so grateful that the Christmas hype has ended, and we can finally go back to our normal lives again.

Christmas has turned into a time for people to spend a whole year-savings on toys, clothes and electronics or other gifts for their loved ones. It's a time of spending and splurging. For people who can't afford presents, Christmas sucks.

Imagine waking up and seeing little to nothing under your tree on Christmas morning. It would be awful, especially for younger kids who may not understand the concept of money yet. My grandfather always told my father the story about one of his first Christmases.

He was an only child with a single mother and the only present they could afford was a tin soldier each year. Growing up, he always thought he was “naughty” because he did not receive a pile of presents from Santa. He just didn't understand how difficult it was for his mother to afford the luxuries others took for granted.

The commercialization of Christmas dates back to the early 1900s and has been growing ever since. Although Christmas first gained popularity during the time of Roman Emperor Constantine, its marketing powers did not grow until this past century.

Many Christmas traditions come from religious scripture or cultural celebrations, however, the media has created the holiday we know today.

In 1870, Christmas was declared a Federal Holiday in America, and about fifty years later, the media started to establish the traditions we celebrate today. Popular songs and movies created famous characters such as Rudolph, a shy Reindeer who is ostracized by society when he can not conform to the jobs and tasks he is forced to complete.

Another tradition established by the media, is the beloved Santa Claus. Coca-Cola released an ad showcasing Santa in a red suit and a big white beard. This ad established the image of the God-like figure whom children worship and parents praise to this day. Santa Claus has become more crucial to Christmas than the person for whom the day is named.

To add to the Christmas mythology, the movies we watch every year help to brainwash us. Why do we watch these same films every year? Not for “family traditions” like we say we do, but because they display every single one of the archetypes that Americans love so much. Chaos, food, presents, trees, snow, and family.

These movies just add on to the marketing powers of businesses, telling your average Miller, Smith, White and Wilson families that they NEED to get gifts in order to have a good Christmas. For example, ‘National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation’, one of the most successful Christmas films of this generation, displays all the chaos of the holidays.

However, the entire movie is centered around materialism and the want for a Christmas bonus to pay for a new swimming pool. Although the Griswold family bonds strengthen, the whole movie is based on how their family was torn apart over the commercialization of Christmas, yet glued together once they get the money and presents they wanted.

The marketing strategy of Christmas starts months before this holiday arrives. The beloved Black Friday shows just how materialized this holiday has become. The economy depends on Black Friday for companies to break even, but its effects weigh on the holiday as a whole. Black Friday and Cyber Monday are all about spending. Christmas propaganda makes it appear that one MUST buy presents to showcase their love for family, friends and significant others.

Nothing is wrong with the religious holiday Christmas. What is wrong is how commercialized it's become and how it is shoved down the throats of all American consumers.

## It is not time for Tom Brady to call it a career just yet

by Dominic DiTommaso

The best part of this past Super Bowl was not in the game but in a commercial when Tom Brady said, “Me? I'm not going anywhere.”

It is not time for him to call it a career. It's time for him to take his career somewhere else.

I long thought that it would come down to Bill Belichick eventually saying “no” to Tom Brady, but I think now it might come down to Brady saying “no” to Belichick.

I believe that Brady will, and should, play elsewhere next season.

It is time for Brady and Belichick to go their separate ways, and I would love to see how Belichick does without his quarterback.

I get offended when many claim Bill Belichick as the “greatest head coach of all time”. He is a proven cheater.

Robert Kraft recently spoke with NBC's Peter King and detailed how he hopes No. 12's career ends: “I just hope and pray that we fit into Tom's plans.”

He wants to see his quarterback either continue playing with the Patriots or retire. He doesn't want Brady to finish his career with another team.

I think that Brady still has championship-level football in him. In 2018, he beat Patrick Mahomes and Aaron Rodgers head-to-head. Then, he oblit-

erated Philip Rivers and the Chargers, then went to Kansas City for the AFC Championship Game won that game, and then won his 6th Super Bowl in an 13-3 win over the Rams.

This past New England season can't be blamed on Brady because he was strapped with the worst supporting cast in the National Football League.

He had the worst offensive line of his career, the worst running game of his career, the worst running backs of his career, and the worst tight end group of his career.

In the playoff loss to the Titans, Brady threw 20 passes to tight ends and only seven were caught.

The receiver Brady trusted most was Julian Edelman, and he led pro football this year in drops.

And Brady didn't exactly have the greatest defense backing him up. In the last 10 games of the season, in which New England went 5-5, Belichick's defense dropped to 24th in the NFL in stopping the run, and in the playoffs, Derrick Henry rushed for 182 yards.



So Brady got zero help this past year, and it's not getting any better. Eleven of New England's 22 starters are over the age of 29, and six more players are over the age of 29. Brady should be sitting back saying “This is bad, and it's not getting better.”

The Patriots have never drafted a wide receiver in the first round with Tom Brady at quarterback -- except this past draft.

They got N'Keal Harry, who missed the first eight games due to injury. It's starting to look like Belichick missed on that one

I'm not the only one with this opinion; people who know football like Tony Romo, Cris Collinsworth, and Randy Moss all said they believe Tom Brady is not done playing football.

That being said, where should Brady play if his time as a Patriot has ended? Tom Brady belongs in Los Angeles on the Chargers.

The Chargers are a talented team that just released their quarterback, Philip Rivers. The Chargers and Brady are a perfect match. The Chargers are moving into an obscenely expensive

new stadium and they need some star power to help sell tickets and Tom Brady needs a team with more talent.

The Chargers have weapons at receiver, like Keenan Allen and Mike Williams. The only time in his career that Brady had a truly credible wide receiver was in 2007 when he had Randy Moss who set the NFL record for most touchdown catches in a season.

Brady is dangerous when he has dangerous on his team.

If he does move to LA, the Chargers will head to Super Bowl LV.

I think Brady is sitting right now and remembering that Belichick sold him out three years ago to try and get Jimmy Garoppolo to take Brady's starting job.

He might be remembering that Belichick, in Super Bowl LII, let backup Nick Foles throw for 373 yards and hang 41 points on the Patriots, while Brady threw for an all-time post-season record 505 yards and put up 33 points, the most ever by a Super Bowl loser. That's stuck in my craw, and I guarantee it's stuck in his.

There are other possibilities such as San Francisco and Las Vegas, but I'm sold that Los Angeles is the place for Brady.

Some are saying it's time for Brady to ride off into the sunset. Actually it's time for Brady to ride to Sunset Drive. Los Angeles, California, 90027.

# Oracle eats at The Capital Grille

by Stephanie Bodner, Julia Falgione & Bailey Ritchey

The Capital Grille is a fine dining restaurant located on Fifth Avenue in Downtown Pittsburgh. A few members of the Oracle staff attended The Capital Grille in January. Labeled as a “fine dining” restaurant, these restaurants typically have very high prices. Pittsburgh’s Restaurant Week is an event that many restaurants across Pittsburgh participate in. The participants create a modified menu and a set price that is significantly cheaper than their normal prices. If you go to one of the restaurants during this event you get an appetizer, entree with sides for the whole table, and a dessert.

Steph- The Capital Grille was nothing short of a night to remember. The warmth that greets you as you walk through the door was a perfect metaphor for the meal that awaited us. From the atmosphere of those on dates to those in business meetings, the restaurant was bursting at the seams with anxious hungry people waiting to get a taste of your not so everyday food.

The dinner itself was nothing short of exceptional, from the first bites of salad and bread, to the last bites of cheesecake. I ordered my steak medium well, and it was cooked perfectly. The mashed potatoes and green beans were like the cherry on top. The restaurant and night were an overall 11/10.

Julia- My meal at the Capital Grille was absolutely terrific. First when we sat down the server brought us over the bread. We ate every piece of bread that came in with it. Most restaurants only have one or two types of breads, but the Capital Grille had five. After the bread,

we got our pick of soup or salad. I decided to upcharge to the lobster bisque which was amazing. I have never had a lobster bisque with so much lobster in it. Most places have the broth and about five small pieces of lobster, but the pieces were huge in the bisque at the Capital Grille.

Next was the main course and we all got filet, which I got cooked medium rare. The filet was absolutely amazing and tender. We also received mashed potatoes and green beans served family style which were very good. Lastly, we all got a dessert. I decided on the flourless chocolate espresso cake. The cake



was like a creamy and rich custard and was extremely sweet, but in a good way. The Capital Grille was absolutely amazing and I definitely would recommend it.

Bailey- The Capital Grille was one of the best meals I have

ever had. The bread that was brought to our table was fantastic, specifically the sweet bread. While the restaurant was very busy, our server was very kind and helpful. I chose salad which complimented the bread well. If this was the whole meal, I would be more than satisfied.

For the entree, we were given five options. I chose the 8oz. filet mignon. I used to not like filet mignon for some reason, but The Capital Grille has changed my mind. I enjoy my steak well done every single time.

Whilst being cooked all the way through, it was still the best steak I have ever eaten. The sides that came for the table included mashed potatoes and various mixed vegetables, which were all amazing. For dessert, I ordered a New York style cheesecake. It was so much better than the Cheesecake Factory’s. I highly recommend The Capital Grille to everyone.

\*\* When the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary in England first took in this “soggy” bird, it thought she’d been injured. Turns out she was just a tad too chunky to be airborne.



The rescue and conservation group explained that on weighing the bird, they discovered she was “extremely obese” — roughly a third heavier than they would expect a large healthy female little owl to be.

The group’s head falconer told the BBC that the area where the owl was found had been crawling with voles and mice due to a mild winter.

Following a couple of weeks of a strict diet, the owl was released back into the wild at a more natural weight.

\*\* A construction crew in South Carolina made an unusual discovery while working on a property -- an artillery shell dating from the Civil War.

The device was identified as an unexploded artillery shell from the Civil War.

The object was turned over to the U.S. Air Force’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.

\*\* A Texas zoo is allowing jilted Valentine’s Day revelers to name a cockroach or a rat after their ex -- and then see it fed to a larger animal.

The San Antonio Zoo’s “Cry Me A Cockroach” event allows visitors to the zoo website to pay \$5 to name a cockroach after their ex, or \$25 for a rat.

The roaches will be fed to various animals, while the rats will be fed to snakes. The feeding will be live streamed online so purchasers can witness the demise of their named animals.

\*\* A West Virginia Girl Scout used the power of the Internet and social media to meet her goal of selling Girl Scout cookies to customers in all 50 states.

The Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council said Rory Clark, 7, a Daisy Girl Scout, used a website and social media to sell cookies in all 50 states with help from her mother, Becca Fint-Clark.

“We weren’t sure if it could be accomplished but thought it would be a fun way for her to learn more about U.S. geography,” Fint-Clark told WCHS/WVAH.

Clark used a map to keep track of her sales and colored in each state to mark them off.

THE GRID	Who is Your celebrity valentine?	What is your favorite thing to do in Pittsburgh?	What is your dream vacation?	What is your favorite Super Bowl commercial of all time?	What is your favorite Super Bowl performer in the past?
Freshman <b>Sophia Rau</b>		Tom Holland 	Go to Penguin games 	going to a beach with clear water 	Dorito Commercial 
Sophomore <b>Connor Schneck</b>		Mr. Lamphere 	See the Steelers 	the peanut butter factory 	The M&M's are funny 
Junior <b>Alyssa Deleonibus</b>		Troy @ zarbruh 	go to the Milkshake Factory 	Bora, Bora 	Dorito Commercials 
Senior <b>Jon Brougher</b>		Lady Gaga 	Sightseeing 	Nice tropical island 	Dorito time machine 
Faculty <b>Mrs. Tepshich</b>		Why have a celebrity valentine when my real life valentine is so awesome?	Take a walk or ride a bike on the North Shore	European tour or a Mediterranean Cruise.	Betty White Snickers commercial 

# Mohr's love for science shows in her teaching

by Ashley Llana

AP Biology teacher Mrs. Emily Mohr is a favorite among students and staff. Not only does Mohr take pride in her work, but she also values being a mother and putting energy into her favorite hobbies.

Born in a naval hospital in New London, Connecticut, Mohr moved around frequently as a child. She lived in many states, including Maryland and Virginia, due to the fact that her father was in the Navy. At age 4, Mohr and her family moved to Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

"My parents actually met in Annapolis when my dad was at the Naval Academy. My mom was a medical technologist, so she basically looked at cells and things under the microscope and helped to diagnose diseases," Mohr said.

As a child, Mohr loved animals. Surprisingly, she had a particular fascination with cicadas. Based on her infatuation with all types of living creatures, she was set on majoring in veterinary medicine. After discussing her plans with her parents, she decided to major in biology, just in case things didn't work out.

"I loved anything that was living. We would go fishing, and I would hate to kill the worms because I thought that it had a place in the world, too," she said.

Mohr studied at Westminster as an undergraduate. Over Christmas break of her freshman year, she participated in an intense internship and decided that veterinary medicine wasn't for her. Because she loved biology, Mohr then decided to go into medicine to become a doctor. During the summer before her junior year, she got a job at a camp with high schoolers in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. It wasn't until then that she discovered her true passion, teaching.

"I absolutely fell in love with hanging out with high schoolers. I was so de-



Mrs. Emily Mohr

pressed at night while I was studying for my MCATs, and so happy during the day when I was hanging out with younger people," Mohr said.

After thinking long and hard about her decision and conversing with many people, Mohr decided to give teaching a try. She graduated from Westminster with a degree in biology and went to Slippery Rock to get her certification and a master's degree.

Mohr has been teaching for 18 years. She first taught at Norwin School District as a long-term substitute for six months. Although she had never heard of Shaler Area before applying for a job, she did not hesitate to accept the offer to teach eighth grade physical science.

For her first five or six years in the district, Mohr taught physical science at what is now Shaler Area Middle School. Eventually, she began teaching Honors Biology at the same building. When the freshmen were moved to the current high school building, Mohr followed them and continued to teach Honors Biology, along with regular Biology. Four years ago, she began teaching AP Biology.

Mohr loves planning lessons, executing lessons, and coming up with creative ways to teach her students. She enjoys teaching AP students because they expect to be challenged and complete more academic, thought-provoking assignments.

Despite the fact that she lives such a busy life, Mohr makes time for the things that are most important to her. It helps her to make a to-do list and live presently rather than thinking ahead.

"I seem to be able to fit everything in if I make a to-do list and be very present about each thing on the list. It helps me to stay focused when I'm living in the moment," she said.

Mohr has many hobbies that she is passionate about. One of her favorite activities is distance running. Mohr has been running since high school. She has participated in four marathons: Cleveland, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Columbus. Running is one important factor in relieving the stress of her daily life. On stressful days, Mohr even runs at school during her lunch break.

In addition to running, Mohr also enjoys music. She knows how to play a few different instruments, including the piano and the guitar.

"My husband got me a guitar for our tenth anniversary. I've been playing every day, nonstop. I rock out in my living room. My husband plays the fiddle, I play the guitar, my daughter sings, and we have a little family band," she said.

Even though she has accomplished many things throughout her life, Mohr's biggest accomplishment by far was giving birth to her daughter, Adele. To her pleasure, Adele is interested in all-things science. Mohr and her daughter cook together often and she explains to Adele all of the science behind cooking.

"She has brought a new level of joy into my life," Mohr said.

Since her husband is also off during the summer because he's a teacher, Mohr cherishes family time. She spends her time off doing things such as reading, gardening, and biking during the summer months.

Mohr loves her job and has no plans to pursue a different career in the future. According to her, she is teaching the kids she wants to teach, the class she wants to teach, and she's in the perfect school district.

"I am 100% happy here. If I died tomorrow, I would (die as) the happiest person."

## Jackson brings diverse background

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"I have had many friends leave my life based on my job, and that is something I have to respect and understand. I understand both sides of the story. I had many friends that were raised to believe that the police were the bad guys, and that's something I can't control. It's their opinion and that's fine," he said.

Being raised in a home with an officer as a father, Jackson was not raised with the viewpoints that some have about police.

Society as a whole is a large melting pot of opinions on authority. Pop culture has a big part in molding the idea of the ideal police officer. Jackson is very aware of how police are perceived in movies, books, and especially on television.

"I watch some of the shows on TV. They are getting better with not being as ridiculous. There are still some shows that are not accurate in the least bit, but when I watch them I like, Chicago PD, 911, and Criminal Minds."

One thing is certain when it comes to Officer Jackson, we are lucky to have him in our district.

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# War reporter shares stories from around the world

by James Engel

“Most trips, in the few days before I’m about to leave, I don’t sleep, I don’t eat, and I imagine everything that could possibly go wrong. I’ve had some real close shaves with IEDs, and snipers, and ambushes, and gunfights. Looking back over the past years, I think I’m lucky to be in one piece.”

That is the life of war correspondent Ben Anderson. From Brazil to the Congo to Afghanistan, Anderson has been there and reported on it. He has been through raging gunfights, risky patrols, sniper battles, and utter destruction, all for the sake of presenting the public with a clear and accurate view of war and its effects on civilian populations.

Anderson has made numerous film documentaries and has reported from nearly every conflict zone in recent history. He began work with the BBC and reported from the notoriously dangerous West African coast. His most notable early work came after former President George W. Bush famously claimed that Iraq, Iran, and North Korea were a so-called “Axis of Evil.” Bush’s security advisor, John Bolton, would later add Syria, Libya, and Cuba to this list. Anderson went to each of these nations to investigate what the people and culture were truly like, calling the documentary series “Holidays in the Axis of Evil.”

“Of course you read everything you can before you go to these places, but the point of going out there is to find out what’s really going on. You talk to people, you hang around, you find out what’s happening, and very often you find out that what is happening is very different from what we’re being told, especially in the buildup to war. Even in countries like Iran and North Korea where you think that everybody is going to be hostile, you find out that they’re really not that different from us... I was really trying to bring out the human element in these big international stories,” Anderson said.

Although he has reported extensively throughout the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, Anderson has spent a large part of his career in Afghanistan, specifically in the southern Helmand province. In Helmand, he has embedded with both British and American armed forces to report on the violence in the region.

After years of filming documentaries like “Taking on the Taliban” and “The Battle for Marjah”, Anderson wrote a book on the ongoing struggles in the country called, “No Worse Enemy: The Inside Story on the Chaotic Struggle for Afghanistan.”

“Books are so much more comprehensive than most documentaries, and I’ve seen so much happen over the years, and the patterns were so clear, and what was going to happen [in Afghanistan] was so clear that I felt, even if no one reads this book or it doesn’t have much impact, at least everything I’ve seen is collected in one place and on the record,” Anderson said.

Following the success of his book, Anderson again set out to Helmand to film another documentary. This time Anderson documented the failure of the Afghan government to stand on its own as US forces placed more and more responsibility onto it.



Journalist Ben Anderson stands among bombed ruins in Mosul, Iraq. (HBO)

He sarcastically titled this piece “This Is What Winning Looks Like” based on a speech by a US marine general.

“I knew that the Afghan security forces were not up to the task of doing this themselves, and I knew that they had all kinds of problems with corruption, as well. So I knew that if I could get there and film the Marines handing over power to the Afghans that it would be chaotic, and it would be a picture of what the war would look like in the not too distant future,” Anderson said.

Not only did Anderson expose the high levels of corruption within the Afghan Security forces, but he also shed light on the rampant drug use and frequent molestation of young boys within the supposedly stable and well-equipped force.

The film helped to show the British and American public that the war in Afghanistan was not going the way that their leaders had explained during press conferences and that the state of southern Afghanistan was not at all pacified.

After years of reporting for the BBC and other news outlets, Anderson joined Vice News as a producer and correspondent. Vice, unlike most mainstream American news networks like CNN, is willing to send correspondents like Anderson to film extended pieces

and embed with soldiers during battle and highly dangerous situations.

Vice has filmed inside the Islamic State, interviewed Taliban fighters, and has filmed extended documentaries in rebel-held territory in Libya and Syria. Anderson, during the fall of Mosul, interviewed an ISIS fighter who, without reservations, said he would kill him if he were given the chance.

“We’re willing to take a calculated risk; I don’t think we’re as crazy or reckless as some people think we are. Some people think it’s only a matter of time before someone from Vice gets killed because we just storm into all kinds of situations with no calculations whatsoever. That’s not true. I think we’re just willing to take more risks and spend more time in these places. If myself or another correspondent is going to Syria or Afghanistan, we’re going for three weeks minimum, or possibly five or six weeks for one fifteen-minute piece,” Anderson said.

Even though these risks are calculated, the situations faced by Anderson and fellow correspondents are extremely dangerous. In places like Afghanistan or Iraq, death could be one step away as IEDs are all too common along frequently trafficked roads. Anderson filmed day-long firefights in Marjah, Afghanistan where a bullet from a Taliban sniper came within inches of hitting his head. Despite the fact that Anderson has thus far left these regions with no serious injuries, he has seen many of his journalist comrades killed and maimed in an effort to report the truths of war.

“My friend was on a really routine and fairly boring patrol, Joao Silva, a New York Times photographer. We were in Kandahar [a large city in southeast Afghanistan] together, and it was painfully boring. We were seeing nothing, we were actually trying to get out of there and get to Helmand instead and join the US Marines, but couldn’t. So we kept going out on various patrols, and I went on one side of the river and he went on the other and stepped on an IED and lost both of his legs,” Anderson said.

Although Anderson has come out of these zones of conflict physically unscathed, he does suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after years of being surrounded by constant violence and conflict. He has participated in regular therapy for years but has recently tried experimental, government-approved MDMA and Ketamine therapies. Unfortunately, all of these have thus far been unsuccessful.

“My PTSD, I think, had led to a kind of numbness when I was in these situations. I probably took on risks I shouldn’t have taken because I didn’t quite take on board how dangerous some situations were. I’ve been in these situations so many times that I’ve become numb to serious danger. I just always went ahead, no matter what, and I never said no to anything. If you’re talking about doing this for years, I don’t know if you can do it without being in danger,” Anderson said.

Even through his PTSD, Anderson has continued to film and work. More recently, he has begun to cover war’s effects on civilian populations and has had less of a focus on combat and violence in his reports and documentaries. His work in the former ISIS capital of Mosul, Iraq featured the reunification of families and civilians crying tears of joy as Iraqi governmental forces slowly took back sections of the large city.

Although the rise of mass communication has allowed humans more access than ever before to contemporary film and writing on global conflicts, it doesn’t seem that we have always taken advantage of this. Anderson and his fellow journalists’ work is only a few clicks away, but it seems that much of the modern world seeks a tweet or a headline rather

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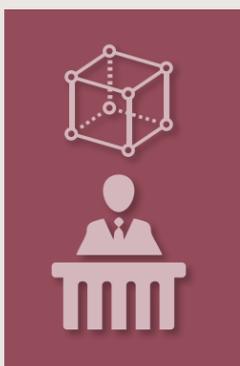
**-- Ben Anderson**

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# Senior achieves rank of Eagle Scout

by Julia Falgione

Senior Jacob Ishman has recently been awarded the title of Eagle Scout from the Boy Scouts of America. The rank of Eagle is the highest achievement possible in Boy Scouts and takes a huge amount of effort and time to achieve it.

Ishman started Boy Scouts when he was in sixth grade due to one of his close friends also being a part of the program. He didn't take much convincing to join.

"My friend said, 'Come to this meeting, try this out,' so I did," Ishman said.

Ishman is passionate about the work he did for the Boy Scouts of America for the six years he was involved and was able to balance his schedule to put in many hours every week to participate in the activities his troop would do.

"We have a meeting every Wednesday night and camping trips one weekend a month. We also do other service projects that we participate in on other weekends, like cleaning various roads," Ishman said.

To be able to achieve the Eagle rank, there were numerous ranks that Ishman had to achieve beforehand. When people join Boy Scouts they start, obviously, as a scout. If they pursue the advancement process they would next be a Tenderfoot, then Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle.

"The Boy Scout Handbook lists all the requirements needed to rank up. There is a combination of First Aid, knot tying skills, fire building and just basic survival skills," Ishman said.

Before Ishman was able to call himself an Eagle Scout he had to get a at least 21 Merit badges. Thirteen merit badges are required to be an Eagle, while the remaining eight can be any of the 135 offered by the Boy Scouts of America. Some of the thirteen required for the Eagle rank are camping, personal fitness, Citizenship in the community, etc.

"I personally have twenty-four merit badges and like to complete the ones that are interesting to me like electricity or wood carving," Ishman said.

Ishman also participated in a program called National Youth Leadership Training, which was a week-long program where the scouts were taught how to lead. When a Boy Scout is attempting to rank up to Eagle he has to be knowledgeable on how to lead others because he would be the top rank in the troop.



Jake Ishman and his parents

The Eagle Project also had to be completed to earn the rank. The Eagle Project is supposed to demonstrate leadership of others while performing a project for the benefit of his community. Ishman decided to complete a project at his church, North Hills Christian Church.

"There was a walkway at my church, made out of wood. It was falling apart and rotting away, so it was very unsafe. So I tore it down and decided to rebuild it with Trex, so it is now sturdy, safe, and waterproof," Ishman said.

Being an Eagle Scout is truly a great achievement that takes many skills and many hours devoted to the Boy Scouts of America Program.

"Scouts is a really great program to learn new things and to experience things you wouldn't elsewhere. It is an excellent way to prepare for life and I feel like it has done a good job to prepare me for the rest of my life, especially with the morals and leadership skills that the program enforces," Ishman said.

After putting in the time and effort to achieve everything he has, many of Ishman's friends and family are proud of him, as they should be.

"It's quite an accomplishment and it takes a lot of work to get there. I'm proud of him as a friend and his family is proud of him too," senior Jon Brougher said.

## War reporter shares stories

from page 6

**"I think people are losing the ability to basically read and study issues."**

than the unadulterated facts of a conflict.

"I think people are losing the ability to basically read and study issues. Yes, The New York Times gets it wrong now and again, but it's largely reliable. But that's just a starting point, you've got Wikipedia, you've got books. Despite the bad state of the US news media, it's a golden age for writing... This stuff is all out there, it's just not widely read. I don't think it's that hard to educate yourself about what's really happening and what the basic facts of these conflicts are. And that enables you to put serious and intelligent pressure on elected officials," Anderson said.

Regardless of the effect that it has to the general public, Anderson is always planning his next report. He has future plans in Burkina Faso, a West African nation that has recently seen conflict arise. Anderson has a passion in awareness, and it does not seem that that passion has let up during his long career. He has found his purpose in the world's worst places, but despite this he has never given up the thankless work that has come to define him and this current generation of conflict journalism.

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