

# The Oracle

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## Positive Painting promotes teen mental health

by Alyssa Hillwig

In association with the Positive Painting Project, the LIGHT Education Initiative hosted an all-day painting session in the LIGHT classroom on Thursday, January 6. A project that aims to encourage positive mental health practices with creativity and art, its very emotional backstory and important message allow the project to create and sustain an impact so far beyond its humble origins.

People always seemed to gravitate to Katie Whyson, a passionate young woman and student at Fox Chapel who had immense artistic ability and big ambitions. Although she had always been described as a sweet and quiet girl, she never shied away from using her voice to support marginalized groups on campus, especially the LGBTQ+ community, and to encourage the people around her to never fear reaching out for help for feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

On March 10, 2021, Katie lost her own battle with depression, but her presence in her school and the community did not fade after the tragic loss. Her strong spirit continues to brighten up the hallways and bathrooms that hold the paintings created in her honor through the Positive Painting Project.

Katie's parents, Todd and Alisa Whyson, worked with her art teachers to memorialize their daughter in a way that would reflect her ambitions. For the Positive Painting Project, students are encouraged to create their own colorful designs and paint them onto canvases, where positive messages would then be screenprinted onto them. They are then installed in the school restrooms, a common place for children to seek privacy when they are upset, to provide an extra layer of support for students in need.

"The whole idea is to de-stigmatize mental health and begin to have more conversations about it with teens," Todd Whyson said.

The LIGHT center at SAHS took up this opportunity, as teachers Mr. Nick Haberman and Mrs. Catlyn DiPasquale felt that a student-created project



Students participate in the Positive Painting Project on January 6.

like this was a great opportunity to allow students to decompress while contributing to something much bigger.

"We as LIGHT chose to pioneer this because [LIGHT] started as a way to preach remembrance about the Holocaust, but now it has grown to be representative and supporting of so many communities, the LGBTQ+ as well as those battling against racism, sexism, the mental health stigma, and more. We're extremely happy to use programs like this to support that," Mrs. DiPasquale said. "I hope that it provides students with a good outlet to just kind of express themselves or get a break from the stress of finals and midterms, but it will also hopefully beautify the school and create more awareness around

mental health."

By asking students to sign their names and graduation years on the backs of their paintings, she also hopes that it will create a sustained message of positivity throughout the school for years to come.

"I love that it's completely student created and it will be a lasting feeling of happiness around the school, since we asked students to put their names and graduation year on them so if we continue to do this, we can hand some of the paintings down and interchange them in the future," Mrs. DiPasquale said.

Originally, the teachers associated with the LIGHT Center had no idea what the turnout for this

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## Musical enduring the financial fallout of COVID

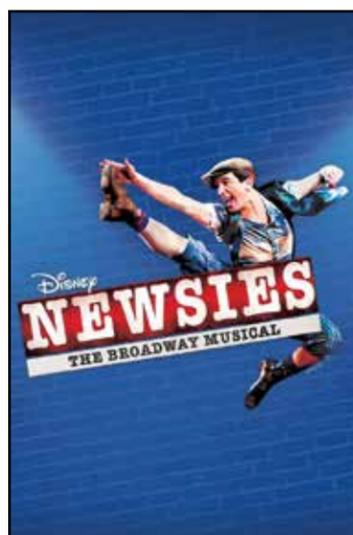
by Hannah Stelitano

As SAHS students involved in this year's musical, "Newsies", begin to prepare for two weekends of shows in March, one persistent issue keeps coming up: money. As new director Mrs. Jennifer Birch is preparing students for these shows, a tight budget is causing her to run into many challenges along the way.

"For the past two years, we have been working with a much tighter budget than normal, thanks to COVID. In 2020, everything shut down in the middle of the run of Shrek – in essence, halving the profits that would normally have replenished the musical accounts. In 2021, the schools were open, but because of distance, Wedding Singer had fewer shows with fewer audience members present at each," Mrs. Birch said.

Two years ago, SAHS put on a production of "Shrek" but due to COVID, one weekend of these shows was cancelled. In previous years, the money from the first weekend of musical shows was used to cover the costs of that year (rights for the show, props, costumes, etc.) and the money from the second weekend was used to get a head start on the budget for next year's show. Due to the shut down, the second weekend of shows was never able to provide for the financial resource for the next year's show.

Last year, it was difficult to get the rights to a show due to this already tight budget. A whole new staff of directors was in charge last year and it made directing a show even more challenging considering it was their first year directing a musical in addition to the financial issue that were present. Ultimately, the "Wedding Singer" was chosen and the show ran smoothly. Some money was able to



be gained back through program ads. Limited audience and virtual performances held down the normal amount of money generated by a musical, but ultimately, some money was put back into the budget.

This year, the rights to the show "Newsies" were a huge expenditure. Although they were very expensive, money is not what will define this show.

"In the end, the real beauty of theater isn't the set or the costumes. It's the unique chemistry the cast, crew, and pit create with their audience. So having to economize on some of the bells and whistles might not have been what we would anticipate, but it isn't going to stop us from putting on a show that will touch the hearts of our audience. People are yearning for live theater after so long without it, and this show is the epitome of joy, perseverance, and overcoming obstacles," Mrs. Birch said.

With a team of directors, costume designers, artists, parent involvement, and donations, this production is going to be one of the best that Shaler Area has seen in a while.

"We are working hard together to make magic! The parents on set construction and Mrs. Paul in the green room especially are doing a great job of creating art on a budget. And the Tribune-Review has most generously donated over 1,000 old newspapers to our show so we don't have to spend money purchasing those props," Mrs. Birch said.

Although the budget is tight, Shaler Area Performing Arts students are not letting this money define their show. They are determined to make it the best they can even on a tight budget and hope that this year's shows will help to replenish the normal funding for the musical this year and next.

# OPINIONS

## Art is important to students now more than ever

by Ella Katona

As we have emerged into the year 2022 (I know, crazy, right?) I have tried to get this feeling out of my brain that something has been missing for quite some time. Finally, I realized what it has been: Art. Though there has been art seen in various areas and it has been picked up as a hobby by many people due to the pandemic, I realized that there has been a lot less motivation or hesitation to contribute to art overall.

Recently, museums have started to open up again, as well as theaters and concert venues, but during the worst parts of the pandemic, a lot of these places were abruptly shut down, which diminished a lot of this vibrant creativity.

Many jobs in the creative arts industries have also dropped significantly during the pandemic, especially in 2020, with nearly 2.7 million jobs lost. Also in 2020, the main 53 metropolitan areas with populations over 1 million estimated more than three-quarters (80%) of total losses in sales for the arts and two-thirds (68%) of all estimated job losses in creative industries across the United States.

The pandemic has inadvertently drawn public attention to science and technology. Though this is absolutely extraordinary and should be continued, I believe that at some point these sciences hold limitations to the imagination. We need to reintroduce that imagination.

By no means am I showing these statistics so that you go out into the world and make a full-time career



something involving art. I believe that anyone can pick up an artistic hobby in any given form whether it be drawing, sewing, painting, pottery, origami, tattooing, makeup, photography, doodling, nail art, metalwork, cake decorating, candle making, crochet, digital editing, or even dancing or singing—the possibilities are absolutely endless.

All I am asking is for you to give it a try. You do not have to be perfect when you start. Practice and failure make you better.

I have heard the same phrase spoken to many who practice a form of art, “Oh, you’re just talented, I wish I could do art just like you.”

That can be interpreted that art just comes easy to those who are involved in it and it is something that they did not have to work on and fail at many times

to hone their skills.

Every person who starts art has to practice and practice to get better, just like anything, so it is not something you should be afraid of or self-conscious about. You can see photos from some people you may know who have taken their time to try out something as a way to express themselves, relieve stress, and just have fun.

Art is universal, creative, limitless, and something that everyone can share new ideas with or give techniques for no matter the level of skill or expertise. I cannot express how much fun it is to bond over art projects. It is something that allows a break from the science and critical reality of our current lives, allowing openings to culture and ways of expression.

You may not like the first hobby you pick up and that is completely okay. It takes a couple trials to find what you really enjoy. At first, I thought I wanted to be really good at drawing with colored pencils and markers, because I thought that was the only way you could conquer art. But, through some boredom and endless trials, I realized that water and oil painting as well as sketching with black ink and coffee is what is most close to my heart and art style.

When you look at art, it can have so many messages or meanings that carry for many years. Art is a communal experience that helps us understand one another no matter the culture. They can make us curious about something that may be familiar to you or something that you have never seen before. But, do not let this scare you and accept it—embrace it.

## School should bring back asynchronous days

by Savannah Schultis

Asynchronous learning is a phrase that was introduced to most of us last year during the pandemic. Every Wednesday, students and teachers would stay home to work on their assignments, catch up on missing work, or simply relax during free periods. Regardless of how asynchronous Wednesdays were utilized, they were extremely beneficial and need to be brought back.

Whether students were separated by cohorts for hybrid instruction, learning virtually, or going to school four days a week, one thing remained constant: asynchronous Wednesdays. They usually went along the lines of joining a Google Meet for attendance, then leaving the call to work on the assignment. Students could stay on the call if they needed to ask their teacher a question.

I enjoyed the independence that asynchronous Wednesdays provided. I felt like they prepared me for what’s expected in college. I completed a lot of assignments on those days because I was able to work at my own pace without any distractions from other students in school.

Not only were asynchronous Wednesdays beneficial, but they were also relaxing. You didn’t have to worry about getting ready for school, you could eat whenever you wanted, and you could sleep during free periods. Having this “break” in the middle of the week was very helpful for a lot

of students, especially from a mental health perspective.

Although we have returned to some normalcy in everyday life, it’s important to recognize that many are still struggling with mental health issues, maybe even more so since we are back in school. It was a very hard adjustment for many students, myself included, to go from virtual learning to in-person school five days a week. I think that bringing back asynchronous Wednesdays would help a lot of students who are struggling to ease back into this routine, while also giving them a small break during the week.

“The weekly asynchronous days that we had last year provided a sorely needed respite from the daily grind of teaching and learning through the pandemic. The school district is responsible for providing an academically rigorous curriculum so that students are challenged to learn and grow as much as possible. However, we must also recognize the strain that the pandemic has placed on our mental and physical health,” Honors Anatomy & Physiology teacher Mr. Tim Taylor said.

Asynchronous Wednesdays could be renamed “wellness Wednesdays” or something to that effect, which could remind students to take care of themselves and prioritize their well being on those days.

Although I am glad to be in person again, I ultimately think that bringing back asynchronous Wednesdays, even if it is every other week, would be very beneficial to students and teachers.

## Literature classes should infuse more recent works

by Kamaria Mutadabur

Contemporary literature is any literature written after World War II. In other words, it’s literature written by people who are, usually, still alive. Popular works like “Life of Pi”, “The Hate U Give”, and “The Goldfinch” are all examples of contemporary literature.

Contemporary literature is easy to read, comprehend, relate to, and sometimes, even enjoy. I’m not saying I don’t enjoy reading the classics like “Crime and Punishment” or “Romeo and Juliet”, but I would love to see more modern literature incorporated into the curriculum as a compliment to the classics.

When students can actually understand the modern language being spoken (rather than something like Shakespeare’s) they can connect with the story and learn more because they are interested. Language has evolved over time, no one any longer has the writing or speaking style of Homer.

So why force students to read one sentence a dozen times just to get the message? How are students supposed to understand the overall arc of the story when they are spending most of the time looking it up on SparkNotes or picking a sentence apart piece by piece?

This isn’t a bash on classics because classics play an important role in the curriculum. They promote and build on universal themes and teach core values like kindness, honesty, empathy, etc. Classics also show a perspective

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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.

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

# Miksic continues to enjoy making a difference for kids

by Rebecca Beckas

If you've ever been in the high school activities office, you've probably seen the woman at the front desk, hard at work. When she's not spending quality time with her husband, sleeping in until 7:30 in the morning, reading, or watching home improvement shows on HGTV, Mrs. Mary Lynn Miksic is doing the job that she loves most, working with students as the Activities Secretary.

Mrs. Miksic began her secretarial career immediately after high school at Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in 1964. Little did she know it was her daughter who would have the biggest influence on her career. When her daughter was in first grade, her school had a policy where a parent of each child had to help distribute lunches on a rotating schedule. With her love for kids and management skills, Miksic excelled in her position, leading to a full-time position when the supervisor retired. She learned the intricacies of the job, such as ordering supplies and handling government subsidies.

"I grew up in a time period when girls didn't attend college. They usually went for secretarial or sales clerk jobs right out of high school... When my daughter was in first grade, I began taking my turn as a "volunteer" in the cafeteria, which eventually led to a full-time position as Cafeteria Manager. I was, once again, surrounded by kids. I LOVED it! I never dreamed that decision would lead me to where I am today," Miksic said.

Because of her concern for the well-being of the children, she started to notice patterns, such as little kids throwing a majority of their meals away while the older kids finished their meals entirely. She then took the time out of her summer to learn her mother's old recipes and make them in large quantities to feed 500 children and 25 staff members, making everything from scratch.

"Feeding the kids what they 'liked' and anticipated always made a difference in their day. Once I got the hang of it, there were a lot more smiling faces as they went through the lunch line. (Given a choice of mushy, cooked veggies vs. freshly cut ones with homemade dip is a no-brainer!)," she said.

To solve the issue of meal portions, Miksic would cut the meals in half, ask the kids if they wanted "big or little", and make sure they felt welcomed to come back for seconds if they were still hungry. It did not matter that her supervisor was skeptical of Miksic's strategy, because it ended up being a complete success. Miksic valued the children's wants and needs, and it clearly showed whenever kids would tell her that lunchtime was the highlight of their day.

"The most rewarding part of my 'cafeteria manager' job is that I still run into former students who tell me how much they remember and appreciate the personal

care that was given to them when they were served their lunch at St. Sebastian. I realize in today's world, with all the regulations, that this is no longer possible. I hope I had an impact and made some positive memories for them. We were just one big, happy family! Now, those kids have kids of their own, and can share their cafeteria experience from 'the good old days!'"

It was in 1992 that she finally decided to leave that job, but she would not be far from the environment with kids that she loved so dearly. On the advice of her neighbor, who happened to be the secretary at Reserve Primary, Miksic applied for a job at Shaler Area.

Under the supervision of Linda Zimmerman, Mrs. Miksic began her career at Shaler Area in 1993 as a classroom aide for the next fourteen years.



Activities Secretary Mrs. Mary Lynn Miksic

"Linda Zimmerman truly was a gifted teacher! She made me feel like she valued my opinion, probably because I was older and had some experience with large groups of kids. Linda taught me so much about dealing with children. I was her aide in the Special Ed. Classroom for fourteen years," she said.

With a guaranteed salary increase and year-round schedule, Mrs. Miksic took on the Registrar's position in the high school guidance department. This job primarily consisted of processing transcripts, entering test scores, and compiling all scholarship information. Due to budget cuts, her position as registrar would be combined with another position of guidance secretary. Instead of remaining in this position and taking on the new responsibilities with the combined jobs, Miksic decided to switch things up, and that summer she transferred to the activities office, where she is now in her seventh year as secretary.

While some may not realize Miksic's duties in the activities office, her job is integral to keeping things running smoothly. Some of the tasks she is responsible for include, but are not limited to, compiling the daily announcements, running the Titan Shop for students to buy snacks in between classes, processing all banking requests that apply to the high school accounts and balance books, and answering any and all inquiries regarding student activities. What may seem "behind the scenes" for students and staff, are normal, routine tasks that come with the job for Miksic.

Even though both of her jobs in the high school offices were secretarial, Miksic has noticed she has a much more one-on-one relationship with the kids that she sees everyday. They're generally happier being in the Activities Office rather than the Guidance Office, and she loves to talk about their personal lives with them, whether it's about their boyfriends, hobbies, or whatever it is they want to tell her about.

If there is one thing that Mrs. Miksic will always make clear, it is that she wants to make a difference for kids, the reason she continues working. She's not just a secretary though, as she is someone to look up to for guidance. She makes sure to treat the kids that visit her with kindness and respect, and reminds them that she expects the same from them. She cares for the kids she works with everyday.

"I love seeing that I can make a difference just by listening to them or letting them know I understand. When they arrive early in the morning grumpy or angry, I just tell myself that no one knows what environment they just left. They might be hungry, or just left a bickering household. I try to settle them and make the Activities Office a safe place for them. I have sometimes encouraged them to talk to their counselor," she said.

It's not just the students that make Miksic love her job so much, but it's her coworkers, too. Mrs. Miksic describes herself as "blessed" when talking about the people she works with in the Activities office, specifically Mrs. Mindy Thiel and Mrs. Holly Siedlecki. Miksic is extremely grateful for Mrs. Siedlecki's help using Excel Program, and Mrs. Thiel's patience with her when figuring things out.

"[Mrs. Thiel] is, by far, the finest director I have ever had in my life!"

Of course, though, Mrs. Miksic's love for the people that surround her everyday is reciprocated back. Whether it's through her student office aids, or the teachers working with her, they find just as much joy being around her and she does with them.

"I love getting to work with Mrs Miksic because you can tell she genuinely loves being here. She creates such a positive environment for students, whether they are one of her office aides or just somebody stopping by to buy something at the Titan shop, and getting to just sit and talk with her is always a pleasure," senior Alyssa Hillwig said.

Now in her later years of being a secretary, Mrs. Miksic looks back on something started by her mother that she calls, "Cute Sayings of the Angels". Her mother started the book with Miksic and her five siblings, and then Miksic continued it when she took the job at Reserve. Whenever a kid would say something funny, Mrs. Miksic would write it down in her book, and teachers would even come to her to tell her something funny that happened so that she could write it in.

"To this day, I still have it. I often look at it with fond memories. I wonder how those kids are doing, and if I made a difference?"

She's always a smiling face in the office, and she's always willing to talk to anyone that comes to see her. She refers to the students as her grandkids, and says she will always act like their grandma at school. She keeps the Activities Office functioning alongside her coworkers. Whether they realize it or not, Mrs. Miksic has surely had an impact on most, if not all the people she's come across in life.

**"I love seeing that I can make a difference just by listening to them or letting them know I understand...I try to settle them and make the Activities Office a safe place for them."**

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# Sustainability classes help fund “green” renovation

by Rebecca Beckas

In another effort to help the community, Shaler Area High School’s Sustainability classes held a fundraiser on November 20th selling succulents propagated and grown by the students.

The incentive behind the fundraiser was to be able to renovate a local community building in Millvale, located at 216 North Avenue. A few years ago, this building was severely damaged by fire, and has been used for storage ever since. It is not going to be a normal renovation, though, it is being labeled a “green” renovation. The building will provide solar energy from solar panels on the roof and an electrical vehicle charging station. The solar panels are important to sustainability goals because they will provide energy from natural resources and will not release greenhouse gases and carbon emissions.

Three local communities: Millvale, Etna, and Sharpsburg, have all earned global Ecodistrict certifications and work together under an organization known as the “Triboro Eco-District”. These certifications are earned by a rigorous process in which the communities must demonstrate a commitment to positive change in six key focus areas: water, air quality, mobility, energy, food, and social equity.

While working on the campaign to save Girty’s Woods last year, Sustainability students and Mrs. Abbey Nilson, the Sustainability teacher, were able to work very closely with this organization. Because of these connections, they were able to collaborate on this project to close a gap between an awarded grant and the funds that were needed in order to renovate the building.

Nilson came up with the idea of the succulent fundraiser because of her love for plants, as well as her love for all things green.

“I love growing plants with students, it is fun and everyone can do it. However, the plants we grow have to be chosen carefully based on how long they take to grow. I thought succulents would work well since they can be propagated fairly quickly by taking a “cutting” from a larger plant and placing it in soil. Roots grow within a few weeks this way. Plus, they are just super-cute,” she said.

This was a process, though, that would take a lot of time and effort, not just from students, but from

friends, relatives, and even local community members.

“The main thing was finding a source of the succulent cuttings – I have a bunch I was able to use from my own plants, and I happen to have a lot of plant-obsessed friends and family members who donated cuttings. We also had support from Melissa Rogers, the Youth Programming Director at the Millvale Community Library, who donated some and came in to help us do final repotting and arranging of our succulents before the fundraiser,” Nilson said.

So while planting came easy for the students with the tools and resources provided, some students applied for, and were awarded, a grant through pgh350.org, which is a branch of an international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. With the awarded grant, supplies like grow lights and pots were bought. There was also a large donation of hand-made pots from a local artist and Mr. Brad Susa, the high school ceramics teacher, who also donated pots that were made by art students.

After the planting and potting process came the set up for the fundraiser. The building that they were able to use is one that was vacant until December first, giving the students a perfect place to set up shop. Nilson described it as an amazing location, as it is on the corner of the busiest intersection in Millvale. The building has plenty of windows, which were great for hanging up signs and artwork that Nilson’s students made to advertise their succulents.

The turnout was everything the group could have hoped for, selling out of their plants and raising over \$1,600. While the event was advertised to last for four hours, the plants ended up selling out in an hour



and a half. Nilson even drove back to the school for extra succulents that had not been potted, some soil, and drinking glasses used for emergency potting. After the very successful event, a member of the community generously decided to match the raised funds, doubling the earnings.

This fundraiser energized everyone involved since there now is enough money to do the “green” renovation.

“I am so proud of all of the students in the Sustainability classes and the Sustainability club who were involved in this. Some students focused on planting and potting, others on promotional materials like flyers and signs, others wrote grants to help us with funding, and so many students came and represented our school so well on the day of the actual sale,” Nilson said. “These students are the leaders of the future and we will need their talents and dedication to help with major global issues, like climate change. Their enthusiasm and hard-work with this project are so inspiring. I think the future will be bright.”

## Positive Painting — from page 1

event would be, but were extremely surprised with the turnout and how many people came to create a painting—over 120 students and 10 teachers came to participate throughout the day.

“At first I bought a total of probably 50 canvases, but then I panicked and worried that it might not be enough so I bought 30 more. Now, it’s fifth period and I just sent Mrs. Piekarski to buy more canvases, so I would say it’s been pretty successful,” Mrs. DiPasquale said during the event. “I think it’s because this gives students something freeing and enjoyable and mindless to do, and it also definitely adds an extra bit of importance when they really know the goal they are working towards.”

Not only did this surprise the coordinators, but Katie’s father was humbled when he saw the turnout, as he knows his daughter would be so happy to see so many people working to break down the mental health stigma and spread positivity.

“I didn’t know what the interest for an outside project like this would look like, but the turnout makes me feel so humbled and happy,” Whyson said. “It’s a message that has resonated with a lot of people and I hope people find it helpful within and beyond my own community.”

With the pressure of the internet, school, and other factors pushing down on teenagers today, Whyson hopes to spread the message that nobody is ever truly alone and help is right around the corner.

“More than ever, teens need to be reminded that it’s okay to not be okay and it’s important to talk about your mental health in the same way you would talk about a physical illness,” Whyson said. “With social media and the way things are now, I don’t think it’s ever been harder to be a teenager and it’s never been easier to find reasons to feel bad about yourself online. Help is always available so it’s most important to say something so they know they’re not alone.”

To learn more about the Positive Paint Project, visit [paintpositive.org](http://paintpositive.org).

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# Comics artist highlights Holocaust “superheroes”

by Addison Kania

“There are three things I always want people to remember about comics especially when we are doing this kind of work: comics have always been for everyone, comics are literature, and comics foster communication through engagement.”

Marcel Walker has known that he wanted to make comics since he was six years old. Today, he is the project manager for the comic books, CHUTZ POW, which tell the heroic stories of survivors of the Holocaust. His dreams came true, mostly due to the many heroes that he has in his life.

Walker grew up in Pittsburgh and found his passion for comics through his love for Superman. By the time he was eight, he was able to tell you everything there was to know about Superman. Superman was, and continues to be, one of his heroes.

Two other heroes in his life were his mom and aunt, who brought him up and raised him to be the person he is now. Walker often says, “in my life, there’s life before Superman and there’s life after Superman.” He means that literally and metaphorically. His aunt was born the year before Superman was first published and his mom was born a year after that. However, these three people were also great influences in his life as they encouraged him to pursue his interest in comics.

Walker was self-taught until he was about 17. He then graduated high school early and attended the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. He went through a two-year program and freelanced for a while after. Eventually, he got a day job and began teaching comics creation at the Pittsburgh Center of Community Arts. In 2014, Walker was hired to become a part of the CHUTZ POW project.

“CHUTZ POW was created to be utilized in schools, but it can be read by general audiences. It is accessible to anyone. I wasn’t literally at the table when it was created, I came in very soon after and that’s how it was described to me and I instantly got it and saw it’s value,” Walker said.

Four volumes of CHUTZ POW have been produced since 2014, each with their own theme. Vol-



ume 1 was the introductory volume that told the stories of survivors who came to Pittsburgh after the Holocaust. Volume 2 widened the lens and focused on national heroes. Volume 3 told the stories of youth who lived through the Holocaust. Finally, the most recent volume, Volume 4, “focused on the specificity of women’s stories because that deserved that kind of attention,” Walker said. Although to call them just survivors would be a huge understatement.

“We use the metaphor “superheroes” because there are three things that we focus on in every CHUTZ POW story: resilience, resistance, identity. You are not a superhero because you survived the Holocaust per say. We refer to them as superheroes because they focused on these three things that got them through however far they got,” Walker said.

Resilience was shown through their ability to maintain their sense of self. Resistance was shown



Marcel Walker

against the forces that were there to extinguish them and their own personal identity. They also were able to retain their identity even through the struggles they faced. This is what makes these survivors heroes. Yet, telling these heroic stories comes with some pressure.

“The main pressure is you want to make sure you get it correct as much as possible, but you also want to make sure you tell stories in an interesting way that readers are going to understand and be engaged with. So there is a balance, you want to get it right, do right by the survivors, you want to make sure the details are correct, visually and grammatically, and you want to make sure it’s engaging. It can be a challenge especially when you only have a few pages to do it,” Walker said.

These challenges though do not keep him from telling their stories so other people can become educated as to what really occurred during the Holocaust. As far as CHUTZ POW goes, Walker thinks the project could go up to at least ten volumes in future years. He continues to want to share these survivors’ stories with the world so they can continue to live on for generation to generation.

“While CHUTZ POW’s core identity is Jewish stories,” Walker said, “it is for everybody and the only way for it to be for everybody is if we all get involved in telling and retelling and keep retelling these stories.”

THE GRID		In 50 years, what new technology do you expect?	If you ruled a country, what would be the first law you’d enact?	What month would you like to get rid of?	What is the one food you just can’t stand?	Favorite weird food combination?
<b>Freshman</b> <b>Ryan McGaffick</b>		Cars to be fully electronic	You wouldn’t have to wait in lines at stores	March- the weather is either cold or warm and there isn’t an in between	<b>Mushrooms</b>	fries with barbecue sauce
<b>Sophomore</b> <b>Zoe Reed</b>		Hovering cars	Every kid gets a certain amount of money when born	January- too long of a month and feels like it takes longer	<b>Kohlrabi</b>	Pretzels in applesauce
<b>Junior</b> <b>Melanie Macedo</b>		A new time system	Free fruit for everyone	November so my birthday would come quicker	<b>Oysters</b>	Pickle slices with peanut butter
<b>Senior</b> <b>Kelsey Durish</b>		Flying cars	All schools start at 8:30	March- it is the worst time of the year and so boring	<b>Tomatoes</b>	Takis and queso
<b>Faculty</b> <b>Mrs. Domencic</b>		mainstream virtually reality	Universal Healthcare	January- it is the coldest	<b>Liver</b>	Avocado and Mac n cheese



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# Stadelman steps down as girls volleyball coach

by Dominic DiTommaso

After four years on the sidelines, Mr. Paul Stadelman will no longer be the head coach of the Shaler Area girls volleyball team. The decision to no longer coach is Stadelman's for "personal reasons".

Stadelman was an assistant coach for the girls volleyball team from 2003 to 2013 before taking over as head coach in 2018. He was an assistant varsity coach for the boys volleyball team from 2004 until he became the head coach for the boys team in 2012. Stadelman will continue to coach the boys team.

"Coaching both the boys and girls programs and giving them both the time and attention needed to keep both operating at a high-level was starting to get to be too much and unfair to both programs," Stadelman said. "The girls and boys both deserve someone to run those programs full-time to maintain their level of success. I realized that I could no longer balance both programs along with other school responsibilities and that was unfair to the student athletes."

All coaches at Shaler Area sign a two-year contract when hired, and then a one-year contract each season after. Coaches are evaluated after every contract is up to see whether they should continue as coach or not. Stadelman signed three contracts (two-year contract in 2018, and then one-year contracts in 2020 and 2021) before deciding to leave the program.

No new coach has been named, and normal protocols will be followed to fill the opening. The vacant position will be posted on the district website and will be advertised. The Titans hope to have a new head coach named by February or March.

"I think it is important to realize the level of commitment that Coach Stadelman maintained while coaching," assistant coach Mr. Rob Yarnot said. "He spent countless hours outside of matches and practices preparing, studying and planning for the season.

"As someone that has coached multiple sports throughout the district over the years, I can say that I was always impressed by Coach Stadelman's love of the game. He is a student of the game and is also one of the most knowledgeable individuals. Coach Stadelman takes pride in his preparation and in-game adjustments, both of which have created the best opportunities for the team to be successful against the best teams in the PIAA."

Stadelman took over a team that finished 6-12 in 2017, and finished 2018 with an 11-7 record that included an eight-match win streak and a WPIAL playoff berth.

Stadelman, Coach of the Year winner in 2018, made the WPIAL Playoffs all four years he coached and finished with a coaching record of 56-19. He is coming off back-to-back WPIAL Championship appearances. The last two seasons, the Titans finished with a combined record of 33-6. All six losses came against North Allegheny, winners of the last five



Paul Stadelman talks with the girls volleyball team. (Tom Rekowski)

Class 4A PIAA Championships and four of the last five Class 4A WPIAL Championships.

In 2021, the Titans won their first PIAA tournament match in program history and made the state semifinals for the first time in Shaler Area volleyball history, boys or girls. The Titans were co-section champions with North Allegheny last season.

"[Coach Stadelman] brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to a team that had a tremendous amount of talent and he was able to mold that into a winning recipe," athletic director Mr. Clint Rauscher said. "He has achieved more than any other girls volleyball coach in Shaler Area history, and he and his team came within a fraction of dethroning the strongest, most accomplished girls volleyball program in PA history, North Allegheny, this year."

Stadelman reflected on his time as coach by realizing the love he had for his players and his gratitude for being a part of the program for four years.

"I loved coaching this group of girls. They are extremely successful and work hard. They do what they need to do to be one of the top programs in our school district and a top girls volleyball program in our region and I am confident that will continue," Stadelman said. "I am happy to have been a part of a historic girls volleyball team, especially as we reflect on our district's 50th anniversary. It is a great feeling to be part of something that has never happened in 50 years. This community was excited about volleyball and our program here and I felt privileged to have that experience and opportunity."

For girls that played for him over the last four years, this news of his departure comes with sadness because of what he meant to his teams.

"We were so lucky to have Mr. Stadelman as our

coach, especially us seniors who had him for the past four years," senior Tia Bozzo said. "He set a tone for the program, and there is no doubt that he was a huge part of our success over the past couple of years. His constant guidance and support made us all better players. He taught us all the values of hard work and dedication and made the sport we all love fun. He gave so much time and energy to the program, and not only coached us about the game, but made sure we knew the value of the community we play for."

The success he and his team's have achieved will be hard to replicate, but the example he has set is one that live on in his players.

"Overall, I believe that Coach Stadelman provided a wealth of knowledge, a strict, but fair, level of accountability and expectation and a deep, emotional commitment to the individual players, coaches and the program," Yarnot said. "It is impossible to ignore the success that the team has had both on and off of the court. While his resignation is a loss for the program, I am confident that the players can continue to own the culture that has been created and the program will continue to thrive for years to come."

Bozzo echoed those sentiments, and included the impact Stadelman had on his players' admiration for Shaler Area.

"We all have an appreciation for our school and community thanks to Coach Stadelman," Bozzo said. "He made volleyball a competitive outlet where we could have fun, work hard, and be together. He was our coach, mentor, and biggest support system. He rallied the community behind us and provided us with every opportunity to succeed. We all loved and respected Mr. Stadelman as our coach, and we are all better players and people because of him."

## Lit classes should infuse more recent works from page 2

of the people before us, connecting us as a society, and allowing us to identify the differences between the past and the present.

But, contemporary literature can relay all the same messages with experiences present day students can relate to. At some point classics were modern, and people could understand, but a good way for students today to engage and learn would be through lessons from the environment in which they live.

Not to mention, classics focus on social issues that simply aren't as prevalent in the 2020s. Issues like segregation, poverty, the overwhelming divide between women and men (still prevalent, but not as much they used to be) are different now. I would love to read books about social issues like homophobia, mental health, and the incredible divide between citizens of America.

All issues that are hinted at, but never gone in depth about. The only place I can find books on those more modern topics is in the school library, but I have to do that on my own. It would be so much cooler to spend weeks evaluating the modern texts with other students and hearing opinions of what it could mean. Since they are not discussed in a classroom environment, these issues are often interpreted as unimportant.

I love classics, but I would also love to discuss modern literature that might be more relatable to me and other current students. Time is always proceeding so we should with it; if we don't, we never really progress. We are just stuck in

the same cycle forever. In order to avoid this cycle, modern literature should be incorporated more in the curriculum of our literature classes.

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