

The Oracle

Volume 42 Issue 4

Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

February 2016

New superintendent a familiar face to SASD

by Kayla Snyder

After the news broke that former superintendent Dr. Wesley Shipley accepted a position at Mars Area School District, Shaler Area started to scramble to find the perfect candidate to be the next superintendent. In November, the puzzle pieces were complete with the hiring of Mr. Sean Aiken.

Aiken is not a stranger to Shaler Area or the administrative scene. He was an assistant principal at Shaler Area Middle School before leaving to take a position at Quaker Valley and eventually another at West Allegheny. However, Aiken had a feeling he would end up back at Shaler Area.

"I love the heart of this community. I feel like it's a strong community where there is so much pride and tradition. It felt really special when I was here before. This is a great place and I feel like we can accomplish great things together," Aiken said.

During the interviewing process, Aiken presented a 60-day plan which he has already begun to implement. It focuses mainly on connecting with people throughout the school district. Aiken wants to build and structure systems in an efficient way, get out into the classroom to see students, meet parents on a regular basis, and have one-to-one discussions with the school board and other administrators in his first two months in the position.

Being a superintendent is a heavily scrutinized title that many people have misconceptions of. Aiken claims that being the superintendent of a school is similar to being a CEO and an instructional leader of a school district. Not only is working with the school board extremely important, he also tries to



Mr. Sean Aiken

connect the community to communicate what is going on and act as that leadership figure.

His top priorities include equal challenges for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade, having a continuous growth mindset, operational efficiency, and fiscal responsibility throughout his career here.

Aiken's focus is always on the students of the school district. So much so, there is a metaphor he uses to constantly remind him of who the decisions he makes.

"I have a compass that sits on my desk. The com-

pass is a reminder of why we do what we do. The compass is a metaphor, it points in the direction towards the students. How does every decision that we make affect the students?" Aiken said.

Aside from being the role of superintendent at Shaler Area, Aiken also plays an important role once his business day ends. Aiken is the proud father of five children with ages ranging from 4 to 18. Due to this, Aiken feels he relates to the parents of the students at Shaler Area.

"I think that parents have always appreciated that I do have kids because I think they know that I've walked in their shoes. I know what they're going through. I think there is an understanding of what it means to be a parent, what the struggles of being a parent are, and making decisions based on what I would want for my own children and how that would apply to the students of Shaler Area," Aiken said.

One of the biggest decisions made in Shaler Area in the past few months was the one-to-one initiative in schools. Aiken was not a part of the process but deems it necessary for children to be exposed to 21st century technology in order to competitively advance in the future.

"Our students need to be competitive in a global marketplace. The more experience and exposure our students can have now to technology that's available, puts our students in a more competitive place. Moving forward our students and teachers need to grow with the use of the iPads and technology," Aiken said.

Aiken hopes that he will be able to finish his career and retire from Shaler Area. In the meantime, he hopes to make improvements and positive changes for the better for the students.

Stage is set for annual Shalerpalooza concert

by Antoni Miladinov

If you've never attended Shalerpalooza then; you've really been missing out. This year's Shalerpalooza will feature the largest variety of acts the show has ever seen. Come out to Mr. Small's Fun House in Millvale on February 20th for a night filled with music. The show starts at 7 pm and tickets are only \$8 from the activities office or performers and \$10 at the door.

"Shalerpalooza's a great experience for students who don't normally get out to see the talent that their classmates have on stage," Shaler Alumni Jake Stretch said. Stretch performed in Shalerpalooza for three years.

In 2009, custodian Dale Mangold began Shalerpalooza which was originally intended to raise money for a scholarship dedicated to a senior who was killed in a car accident that year. From then on, the show has blossomed into a fundraising event for class funds.

"Raising money for the class funds helps reduce the costs for various student activities. Whatever I can do to help save the students money is important to me. It's a way to give back to the community" Mangold said.

Mangold's dedication to the show and students at the high school is what has kept Shalerpalooza alive. Last year, the show raised over \$4,000 that was distributed back to each grade. Mangold has also worked hard to gain sponsors like Hardee's, Shop n Save and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9199.

The sponsors help Shalerpalooza to be a show filled with memories that will last a lifetime.

"This year's Shalerpalooza is going to be a little different for me. This year I'm coming out with my own band and I have a feeling that we're going to be the heaviest band there. Last year was my first time performing on stage ever. I got a lot of compliments that made me feel motivated and inspired to continue writing music. Coming back this year makes me very happy. I'm still a bit nervous but I'm gonna let all my fears out and vibe with the music," senior Tommy Truong said.

Alongside Truong and his band, this year's show will feature performances by many DJ's, bands, Shaler Area Drum Line and many solo performers.

Also in store for Shalerpalooza 2016 is Act 80's Band which features Shaler Area High School's very own Mr. McDermott, Mr. Haberman, Mr. Krenn and Mr. Stivason.

"I've been going to the venue for many years and it's one of my favorite venues to ever be at as a paying customer. I'm excited to be on stage to see what it looks like from that vantage point," Krenn said.



Vanessa Ehrenberger, Charles Bakaj and Zach Marker at last year's Shalerpalooza

Krenn won't be a paying customer this time around, however it would be great to come out and support him along with all of the other performers. The chance to watch your faculty and fellow peers may never come again!

"I'd like to see more crossovers of students in attendance as well as more staff. But most of all, I'd like to continue to promote and feature our student body and give them some experience in the entertainment industry. This will hopefully let them live and experience some of their dreams," Mangold said.

OPINIONS

Evaluating the Pirates' off-season moves

by Justin Jockel

The Pirates and general manager Neal Huntington have certainly been busy so far this offseason. The signing of multiple players to help in the lineup and in the pitching department defiantly gives manager Clint Hurdle some depth heading into the 2016 season. However, the team has yet to make any major acquisitions and in an offseason that has seen the Cubs bring in Jason Heyward, Ben Zobrist, and John Lackey and the Cardinals sign starting pitcher Mike Leake and involved in discussions with multiple top-tier free agents, it's only a matter of time before the Cardinals bring in a star player. The Pirates need to make a major move before Spring Training if they are looking to compete. Not saying the players they have brought in are completely useless, but they need a proven player to compete with division rivals.

Trading 2B Neil Walker to the Mets for LHP Jon Neise

Probably the most notable transaction of the offseason for the Pirates, which featured the organization sending the "Pittsburgh Kid" to New York in exchange for starting pitching depth. This move sparked all sorts of reactions. Some fans understand the move, while others are mad at the fact management could trade a hometown player. Walker is one of the most productive second baseman in the league. Last year, he hit 16 home runs and had 71 runs batted in while supporting a .269 batting average. Trading away that production in return for a 5th starter at best is ridiculous in my opinion. Walker is easily one of the Top 5 at his position. The only way this deal will prove worthwhile is if Neise can learn a thing or two from pitching coach Ray Searage, who has a track record of turning around struggling pitchers (i.e. Francisco Liriano). If that happens, the deal will be end up being great for the Bucs. But as of now, the return the Pirates could've been better.

Grade: C+

J.A. Happ Becoming A Free Agent

The Pirates missed out on a good opportunity here. Happ completely turned himself around when he came to Pittsburgh at the trading deadline last summer. His ERA with Seattle was 4.64 and his ERA dropped to 1.85 with the Pirates. This whole situation is similar to Edison Volquez. Volquez was signed in hopes he could regain his former glory, and did to some extent. The Pirates did not resign him once his contract expired after a good year and he signed with the Royals. Volquez would go in his first season with the Royals and make multiple postseason starts. I feel confident in saying the same situation will happen with Happ. Neise will fill in Happ's previous role as the left-handed starter. Neise is being paid 9 million this year. Happ is being



paid 10 million. Why would the Bucs choose Neise over Happ, when the Pirates have seen Happ pitch specifically for them and has had success? Not good thinking by Huntington.

Grade: D-

Signing RHP Juan Nicasio

By signing Juan Nicasio, the Pirates made a silent, above-average addition to the bullpen. Nicasio worked out of the bullpen for the Dodgers last year and had a 3.86 ERA, while also averaging 10 strikeouts per 9 innings. He also saw his average fastball velocity jump from 92 mph to 95.1 mph. This was a great addition for the Bucs, signing a 29-year-old hard thrower seems like a good buy.

Grade: A

Signing RHP Ryan Vogelsong

This signing doesn't make much sense. Vogelsong is 38 years old and has a fastball that is lucky to reach 91 mph. Vogelsong has not had a season ERA below 4 since he posted a 3.37 ERA in 2012. The Pirates need to invest in quality talent that will help the team down the stretch. Vogelsong will be lucky if he still has a job come July.

Grade: D

Pedro Alvarez Becoming A Free Agent

This past season marked his last with the Pirates for Pedro Alvarez. There were certainly some memorable moments created from the bat of Alvarez, but there were forgettable ones made with his glove. It was proven fact that throughout most of his time in Pittsburgh, Alvarez struggled mightily defensively. The power was always there for Alvarez, but his batting average and defense were the two things that made the Pirates contemplate trading him multiple times during his tenure with the Bucs. Overall, I think the team had to get rid of Alvarez at some point as he is too unpredictable and inconsistent. But the team needs to focus on regaining a power bat through free agency as they have lost over 40 home runs combined with the departure of Alvarez and Walker. If they can acquire a bat that is nearly equivalent to Alvarez in terms of home runs and has a slightly better average, this move is great.

But if the team is hoping Jaso (Alvarez's left-handed replacement) to put up high power numbers, it just won't happen and Alvarez's bat will be greatly missed.

Grade: C

Acquiring 1B Jason Rogers from the Brewers

In mid December, the Pirates traded OF Keon Broxton and a minor league pitcher in exchange for Jason Rogers. This move is strictly for depth at 1st base. With the departure of Alvarez, the Pirates need some role-fillers. And Rogers supported good season stats, posting a .296 average, a .358 on-base-percentage, through 152 at-bats. So, he can prove to be a secret weapon off the bench for manager Clint Hurdle. However, he has limited major league experience as last year was his first full year in the majors.

Grade: B-

Signing C/1B John Jaso

Probably the most risky move of the offseason... signing John Jaso. GM Neal Huntington stated Jaso will mainly be splitting time with Morse at first base this year, which would be okay, if only Jaso had more experience at the position. He has only had 2 starts in his career at first base. We've seen the Pirates do this before, trying to convert other position players into 1st basemen. It's been tried with Alvarez, which wasn't all that successful. Also, it's been tried with native third baseman Aramis Ramirez. Once again, it didn't work. So what is Huntington's solution? Bring in a player in hopes that the third time is the charm. I'm not expecting any different outcome with Jaso. Being Jaso is Alvarez's left handed replacement, it's a stretch that he'll be able to put up the same type of power as Alvarez.

Grade: D

Signing RHP Neftali Feliz

The most recent move by the Bucs saw them signing hard-thrower Neftali Feliz. Feliz was acquired by the Tigers last year. He saw an improvement in his ERA, going from a 7.62 to a 4.58. This is one pitcher signing that I am actually eager to see how turns out. I am optimistic about this move given the quality pitcher Feliz was when he first entered the league. Through his first 3 years in the league, his ERA for a season was never over 2.74. Considering he is only 28 years old, and with a little work from pitching coach Ray Searage, he can gain back the early career success he had. Questions now are starting to surface if this signing may spell the end for Melancon's time in Pittsburgh as Feliz has closer experience. I feel Feliz would have more success pitching in the 7th inning, which sets up Watson for the 8th and Melancon for the 9th.

Grade: A-

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Shalerpalooza - February 20, 2016 - Mr. Smalls Theater...

The Oracle

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Q&A: Kathy Voytko and John Cudia

by Kayla Snyder

Kathy Voytko and John Cudia are both seasoned Broadway professionals who have at least 10 shows under their belt. Recently, the couple performed a benefit concert hosted by the Shaler Area Choir Department.

How did you get involved into the world of Broadway? What was your first show you've ever performed in?

John: What was your big 'breakout' moment? I was taken to my first Broadway show by my parents when I was ten years old. My first public performance was a role in a first grade show. It was a big role with 4 or five songs. I kept on singing and performing and also took up playing the drums. I wasn't really bitten by the theater bug until I heard and then later saw "Les Miserables" when I was in High School. My breakout moment and still the most thrilling moment of my career was making my Broadway debut in Les Miz!

Kathy: I grew up dancing with a small ballet Company in Johnstown Pennsylvania. When I was in high school my parents took me to see "Les Miserables" on tour, and I was hooked from that moment on. I suppose my big break out moment was my sophomore year of college when I was cast as a lead in the musical. I was the Baker's Wife in "Into The Woods." I was scared out of my mind because I truly had no idea what I was doing. But I had a great director and a wonderful cast of upperclassman to guide me through it. From then on I wasn't quite as scared anymore and was able to audition more regularly for more roles.

Where did you grow up? Did that kind of environment make pursuing your dreams easier or harder? If harder, explain why.

John: I grew up in Toms River, NJ. I think it made pursuing my dreams easier because I was so close to New York City. So when I knew it was time to move there, it didn't feel like such a huge leap.

Kathy: I grew up in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. My parents were very encouraging as far as taking lessons in whatever was available. They let me take piano lessons, gymnastics, and ballet. I'm a terrible pianist and I wish I had stuck with it longer but those early lessons (which I sometimes groaned about) certainly instilled a love of music from an early age.

At what age did you know that this was the career path for you? Were you ever skeptical of the career because it's very up and down?

John: I knew it was for me when I heard Les Miz for the first time. That was the moment that all the pieces came together. I loved music, I loved singing, and I loved performing on stage...this one show had it all. After that moment there wasn't anything you could tell me about how hard it was that would've stopped me from going after being in that show. Frankly, I'm still skeptical of this career path because there is never an end goal. I've been incredibly lucky to do a lot of shows- many of them on Broadway-and to be working consistently, but that can all change in an instant.

Mostly I am just thankful and grateful that I have been able to be a full-time actor since graduating from college.

Kathy: I had no idea what this career would be like. I didn't know anybody who was a professional actor. I didn't know anybody who was a professional singer. All I knew was that I was absolutely hypnotized in high school by "Les Miserables" when I saw the actors telling such a powerful story through song.

What is the hardest thing about performing in the Broadway world? Are there any downfalls to being in the limelight?

John: I put a lot of pressure on myself to be my very best all the time. Sometimes your body won't or can't cooperate due to illness or injury. As the roles I've been blessed to play have gotten more difficult and more 'prestigious' the pressure to be better increases too, so that is a kind of a downfall, though its part of chasing the dream of playing big roles.

Kathy: I think the hardest part about performing on Broadway is doing eight shows a week. I know that sounds basic, but when you think doing the exact same thing eight times a week and



Voytko and Cudia performing at the Broadway in the 'Burgh event this past week (photo credit: Kayla Snyder)

trying to make sure that it is fresh and interesting for every single audience (since it is the first time many will see the show) even if it's your 300th time doing it.

How long have you been involved in the Broadway world? Are you in any current productions right now?

John: I made my Broadway debut in 1994 and my most recent performance on Broadway was in 2013 with "Evita"...

Kathy: I did my first Broadway show ("Oklahoma!") in 2002. I'm currently on Broadway in "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder"

For singing, what is your voice part? Do you think this helps or hurts you when it comes to auditions?

John: I am a tenor, and this does make audition difficult as most good male roles are baritones. I fake a really good baritone but most of the roles in my voice type are character or juvenile (boy) roles so there's not a lot to choose from if I want to stick to type.

Kathy: I'm a soprano who can also belt a bit. I always joke that I will sing whatever voice part gets me the job! (Unless there is excessive riffing, that I can't do!)

What do you think your 'biggest' role has been over the past years? Do you ever reflect back on that role?

John: Definitely the Phantom on Broadway. I don't reflect on it as much now but when I do, it is with great appreciation for getting to play that most famous character.

Kathy: I suppose my biggest role was Eva Peron in "Evita". More than reflecting on the role, I think I look back fondly on working with Hal Prince. He is extraordinary and it was a dream come true to work with him every day on that show.

What advice can you offer to any aspiring performers or people in general who are trying to chase their dreams?

John: Believe in yourself. Stand up for yourself. Work hard. Ask for help. All experience is good experience. Be kind, courteous and prepared.

Kathy: Don't go into the arts. Did I talk you out of it? If anyone can talk you out of the arts, then you should go do something else. The arts are hard and uncertain and you have to love what you do every single day. If someone can't talk you out of being in the arts, then it might be something you should pursue.

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25
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Selena Gomez

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Drake

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The Weeknd

To Pimp a Butterfly
Kendrick Lamar

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WEIRD News

Police say an Albuquerque man wanted his mother's traditional New Mexican stew so much he broke into her home and stole it.

The Albuquerque Journal reports that 23-year-old Jonathan Ray was arrested recently after he ignored his mother's orders to stay away from her posole and ran off with the holiday dish.

Posole is pretty delicious-looking.

According to a criminal complaint, Ray sent his mom a text message saying he wanted some of her posole but she told him no.

The complaint says the mother later found her gate and garage broken and a pot of the posole missing.

Ray was arrested on a residential burglary charge. Court records didn't list an attorney for Ray.

The Huffington Post

An Israeli reporter has been stabbed on the job while testing a "stab-proof" protective vest.

Eitam Lachover was filming a segment about a company designing the vests when he decided to be part of the demonstration.

The Channel 1 reporter had agreed to test the hardware, to prove the importance of the gear, but ended up injured.

In a statement to Israeli paper The Globes, the company said Lachover suffered the injury only because he "moved" during the take.

"The knife did not penetrate the vest. The reporter moved during the demonstration, and the 'stabber' missed the vest. The reporter was stabbed slightly above the vest," the company said.

Lachover only suffered a light injury to his upper back after the accident and the manufacturers are still confident the item is safe.

He later said on Twitter that he got stitches and was discharged from the hospital.

The Globes

James Potten of Bristol, England snapped a photo of this surprise he found in a FedEx package last week.

A British man who ordered a Kindle e-book reader says he received a tumor sample, meant for a hospital, instead.

James Potten of Bristol posted a photo of his partially opened package on Twitter Saturday, along with a single-word reaction: "wow."

"You've swapped my new kindle with a tumor specimen. Still waiting for collection," he tweeted to FedEx.

A green paper seal appearing to wrap around the package's enclosed box reads: "Specimen return kit -- Patient tumor specimen enclosed."

"My name was on the outside, but the contents weren't what I expected," Potten told the BBC of his special delivery which he said was sent from an address in California and intended for London's Royal Free Hospital.

Potten said his Kindle was finally delivered on Monday.

The environmental consultant said he didn't open the box but called to have the package's driver return to his house. For a reason not disclosed, the package wasn't immediately collected, however.

Instead, Potten said he struggled to get FedEx to collect it.

"I've been trying to get FedEx to collect it as it is potentially a sample that needs to be tested and sent back with some urgency," he told the BBC. "I don't know where my Kindle is, but if it is at the Royal Free I'd be happy to do an exchange."

Fortunately for Potten, on Sunday he tweeted that the sample was "now on route to its rightful owner" and on Monday he reported having received his actual order.

"Delivered!! Thanks finally to @fedex," he tweeted with a photo of his e-reader.

FedEx, reached by the BBC, said they "regretted the error" and "will consider future changes to our processes."

The Huffington Post, Nina Golgowski

The Oracle Student Newspaper of Shaler Area High School. Check us out online usatodayhss.com/market/shaler-hs-pa

MID(TERMS)

Word search grid containing letters for the words listed below.

AWFUL
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NOTES
SLEEPDEPRIVED
TESTS

BOOKS
HOMEWORK
PROCRASTINATION
STRESS
TEXTBOOKS

CRYING
LABREPORTS
PROJECTS
STUDYING

E D I T I O N

Do you think Pittsburgh temperatures are rough?



This car in Buffalo, NY was completely covered in ice after freezing temperatures and high winds hit the area where the car was parked overnight. "I hope summer comes soon," the owner of the car, 24-year-old Justin Yelen, said. Yelen will now have to hitch a ride with his parents and friends until his car defrosts and is able to be moved.

Inspiring Quotes for 2016

"We need to remember what's important in life: friends, waffles, and work. Or waffles, friends, work. Doesn't matter, but work is third."
— Leslie Knope

"Sometimes you just have to put on lip gloss and pretend to be psyched."
— Mindy Kaling

"Why would I brush my teeth haha I'm a dude."
— @Matt_Olszewski

THE MONTHLY TITAN



THE GRID		If you could be in any movie, what would it be and what part would you play?	Ugly and live forever or attractive and die in 10 years?	If you could only have one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?	Who would you trade lives with for a day?	If you had to live without one of your senses which one would it be?
	Senior Keith Goetz	"Brave Heart" as Mel Gibson aka brave heart himself because he was the original "G"	Ugly and live forever, already am but ok	Momma Goetz's meatloaf	Mr. Schott, I wanna know what it's like to be bald	Sense of hearing, don't gotta listen to all the haters anymore
	Junior Andrew Schramm	Any James Bond movie as James Bond	Ugly and live forever	Chipotle pork carnitas	Bill Gates, are you kidding?	Taste, so I can eat vegetables
	Sophomore Gia Thorpe	"Just Go With It" as anyone just to swim with the dolphins and because it's funny	I'd rather look like me and die at 77	Any chicken: baked, BBQ, Buffalo wings, fried, tenders	Beyonce, absolutely because she can do whatever she wants, but I'd be without Jay-Z	Touch because I don't have to feel it I can just pick it up and eat it right?
	Freshman Natalie Yurasits	"Hunger Games" as Katniss	Attractive and die in 10 years	Corndog nuggets, apples, and peanut butter	Lupita Nyong'o because she is my favorite actress	Taste, so I could eat healthy stuff and not be disgusted

Wrestling team continues successful season

By Jared Panza

The legacy of wrestling at Shaler Area is one that is highly decorated, respected, and well-known throughout the WPIAL. This year's team has proven to be all of those and then some. With a 12-0 record and recent back-to-back wins over NA and Seneca Valley has secured the Titans as the section champions.

In a hard fought match, the Titans came out on top 34-33 over the NA Tigers to move on to the finals, where they moved

on to the section finals. In a second consecutive difficult match, the Titans defeated the Seneca Valley Raiders to become the undefeated section champs.

With such great success, the team has a lot to be satisfied with, especially head coach Drew D'Agostino

"I'm very satisfied so far. Right now we are currently undefeated, which hasn't happened in about 10-15 years and we are currently ranked in the WPIAL which has always been a goal for us as a team," D'Agostino said.

But even with the success so far, Coach D'Agostino is making sure the team continues the hard work with frequent practices.

"We've been practicing almost every day with very intense workouts which help out tremendously on the mat," senior James Demore said.

The team has been practicing for months before the season, and has participated in extra tournaments outside of their regular school



Senior Mike Heintl pins his opponent at the Allegheny County tournament (Barry Reeger Tribune-Review)

schedule. Being around each other so often and practicing together has also helped the team work well together.

"The team has been wrestling with each other since we all started and we know what we're all capable of. We're a family and we'll have each other's back," junior Ron D'Amico said.

One wrestler who has proved himself this year and in years past has been senior Mike Heintl, who earned his 100th varsity win last month, putting him with an elite class of wrestlers here at Shaler Area.

"Mike is a great leader and a great friend. He knows how to push the team and can make anybody work harder," D'Amico said.

But even with the major successes, the wrestling team suffered a major setback with the reinjury of senior Jacob Hartman. Hartman suffered a torn UCL and nerve damage in his right

arm last year and recently aggravated it once again, leaving him out of competition for a few weeks, and possibly surgery depending on how well he is able to heal.

"Jake is a great leader and currently ranked 3rd in the WPIAL so it must be frustrating for him because I know he wants to be on the mat, but right now he's not capable with his elbow. So he has to get reevaluated again and then move forward from there," D'Agostino said.

Even with the injury to their star 145-pounder, the team still was able to produce positive results at the Allegheny County championships this past weekend, with seven wrestlers finishing in the top eight of their class. Mike Heintl, Eric Warren, Ian Scarberry, and Ron D'Amico all placed in third, Jake Polak placed fourth, Dylan Winters placed fifth, and Garret Reinsfelder placed seventh.

But Coach D'Agostino doesn't like to focus on individual successes during the season. Instead, he looks at the team's success as a whole.

"We are doing good as a team. Everyone is contributing as a team. We do have some outstanding individuals but right now we are focused on the team," D'Agostino said.

The wrestling team will continue to close out their season with three final matches. Their last home match is on February 10, in the middle school gym B against Knoch.

Swimming having successful year despite injuries

by Shayla Nguyen

While the winter weather outside is getting colder, competition in the swimming world is heating up. Shaler Area High School's swimming team is currently hard at work to prepare itself for meets coming ahead.

The team has been hard at work since the beginning of the school year for pre-season, with the official season beginning in November. Practices take place nearly every day of the week, with training both before school and after school, as well as practices on Saturday morning.

"We are really tired after practices. It is really hard work, but it is worth it in the end," senior Cassie Battaglia said.

All three of the boys' relays as well as the girl's medley relay have qualified for WPIALS. Senior Gino Cercone and juniors Joe Pasikowski and Abby Banze all qualified for an individual event. Senior Dillon Brown has qualified for nearly all events in the championship. Two divers, senior Mike Schmelzer and junior Evan Kelly, also qualified for the diving championships.

In addition to individual success, the swim team has also had several good meets. Both the boys and the girls have performed well according to coach Keith Simmons. He also said that the team's divers have recorded top scores at dual meets consistently. Yet, even though the team is continually improving and achieving great scores, it will not be satisfied until the season is over.

"The coaches always try to impress upon our swimmers that they can be happy with their progress, but they should never be satisfied with their



Junior Evan Kelly prepares for a dive (Tribune-Review)

accomplishments until after the season," Simmons said.

The team is also working on building bonds and working well with each other. This is especially important this year as the team had to deal with the loss of seniors from last year while adding seven freshmen.

This proves to be both an advantage and an obstacle that the team has to tackle. The freshmen have to adjust to their new environment, both with the pool and the practice/meet schedule as well as their transition into high school.

Another obstacle the team faces every year is injuries. This year the team is nursing six injured swimmers. Simmons said on the bright side, the team is not letting these obstacles stop them from reaching its goals. Everyone is overcoming these issues through determination and perseverance.

"The seniors are committed to finishing out the season helping the team to the best of their ability. The underclassmen are committed to getting through this season and their focus is on

how they will be better prepared for next season. All-in-all, it's business as usual for the varsity swim team," Simmons said.



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New recycling containers a product of grant money

High school plans to promote recycling awareness throughout February

by Madelyn Eichenlaub

New recycling bins have been appearing in the classrooms, hallways, and cafeterias of the district's schools. The money for the bins came from a grant that was awarded to the district.

"Shaler Area School District partnered with the Allegheny County Health Department to revitalize the district's recycling program. The County Health Department applied for and was awarded the grant," Shaler Area's Communications Specialist, Ms. Bethany Baker, said.

The grant allowed the district to increase the number of recycling containers in each of its buildings with the hope that the additional bins will increase the effectiveness of the district's recycling program.

"The placement of recycling containers has been strategic and done in cooperation with the buildings' administration," Baker said. In the high school, more bottle and can recycling bins were placed compared to every other school in the district. The high school generates more bottles and cans, especially in the cafeteria, than any other building in the district. Last year, Activities Director, Mrs. Mindy Thiel, said around 11,000 plastic bottles were purchased each year in the Activities Office.

A portion of the grant money went towards increasing recycling awareness. For younger students, magic shows will be put on in those buildings to show the proper way to recycle. In the high school, the Ecology club is taking the lead to raise awareness.

GATE teachers, Mrs. Christina Palladino and Mrs. Kate Elder, were asked by Principal Dr. Timothy Royall to be involved in the initiative. They talked to the students in Ecology Club about how they would like to show



The recycling bins now used throughout the high school and other district schools.

other students the importance of recycling.

One idea was to film a brief announcement that aired on SATV with the help of Mr. Lee Myers. Senior Elliot Fix talks about how blue bins are for cans and bottles while the green bins are just for paper. Everything else belongs in the trash.

The Ecology Club is starting a recycling awareness program called "Big Awareness, Small Action," which will begin in February. There will be a different announcement each day on recycling.

"Some of the announcements will be about hard to recycle items. I think that cans, bottles, and paper are an important part of

it, but not the only part of it," Elder said.

The club will also be collecting batteries to recycle in the GATE room during February. The Big Green Box Company takes the batteries and recycles them for different schools and companies for a flat rate that includes shipping, handling, and all other recycling fees.

The entire school district is trying to improve recycling in each one of the schools through the new bins and these ideas for awareness.

"We hope this effort increases the volume of items collected to be recycled throughout the district" Baker said.

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