

The Oracle

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Tales from the Inauguration

Shaler Alumna and other college students covered the event in Washington D.C.

by Davis Deasy and Sarah Hefferin

Donald Trump's inauguration was at the center of attention for the media and the entire world. Former Shaler Area student and Oracle staff member Kayla Snyder had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. to cover the inauguration as part of a media group from Point Park University.

After covering much of the campaign and the candidates, the writers at Point Park University's student newspaper, "The Globe", thought it would be exciting to go to Washington D.C. to witness the inauguration. Editor Alexander Popichak had been to the rallies for Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, and Donald Trump in Pittsburgh.

"We had coverage of all three candidates before the election, which was cool," Popichak said, "so over the summer we realized that eventually someone is going to win the election and someone was going to get inaugurated. So in July [we] worked with the university to get a media trip to Washington D.C. and try to get press credentials. [The press credentials] didn't happen."

Despite not being granted press credentials, Point Park hosted two separate Inauguration trips: one for Point Park media (student newspaper, radio station and television station) and one for The Campus Activity Board (CAB) for any other student who wanted to go. Snyder and her colleague Nikole Kost



Protesters at the Inauguration (Nikole Kost)

accompanied the CAB trip to chronicle the events of Point Park students at the Inauguration.

When most of the students on the CAB trip decided to not go to the inauguration, the assignments changed.

"Our goal was to write about what Point Park students were doing in D.C. but that fell through," Snyder said. She noted that many of the Point Park

students ended up in other D.C. places such as the Washington D.C. Zoo.

Without press passes, those involved with the newspaper saw it as an opportunity to move around more and get a better picture of what was happening in several areas of D.C.

"I sent out this giant email to all of the people who I knew were going to D.C. and gave them all an assignment. We were trying to put different people in different places," Popichak said.

Popichak's day started around 4 a.m. after getting four hours of sleep. He boarded a metro to get to the National Mall, where the inauguration was taking place. Popichak and some others waited in three hours worth of security lines, where his camera was checked to make sure it was not a fake. He then found a spot in the mall to watch Trump get sworn in.

"There were so many red hats. So many red hats," Popichak said.

Snyder ended up along the parade route with Nikole Kost at first. They went to bed at midnight, got up at 1:30 a.m., took a five-hour bus ride to D.C. and eventually got on a metro. After the 40-minute commute into D.C., they were greeted with LGBTQ protests when they got off the metro.

"We got out of the metro station and to our left is this big protest group, but it wasn't a typical protest group. There was dancing and blasting Beyoncé's

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9th annual Shalerpalooza set for Feb. 18

by Addeline Deolin

This year, Shalerpalooza is scheduled for Saturday, February 18th and is expected to be bigger and better than ever. Shalerpalooza is an event organized by Dale Mangold, a janitor at Shaler Area High School.

The concert is held at Mr. Smalls in Millvale and consists of a huge variety of performances. This year, there is a wide range of acts including student bands, DJs and solo singers, guitarists, drummers, etc. Shalerpalooza is not just an event for rock/metal music, the music type ranges all the way from EDM to pop.

"It's more than just a rock concert. All genres of music are welcomed. That's what it's all about, to try and have a wide variety of music for everyone attending" Mangold said.

This concert will be the 9th annual Shaler Palooza. Mangold is dedicated to his music and wanted to create an event where students could get involved while doing something they're passionate about.

"That's what's nice about Shalerpalooza, it allows everyone to be themselves. We want everyone to have a positive experience," Mangold said.

Shalerpalooza does not just consist of student acts. In the past, teachers including Mr. McDermott, Mr. Krenn and Mr. Haberman have all performed. Mangold himself also performs with his band, Tobacco Road. Tobacco Road will learn and play music prior to the show for any solo acts that need background music.

Originally, Shalerpalooza was not intended to be a fundraising event.

"At that time, a senior at Shaler, Jessica Peluso, was killed in a car accident and a lot of the bands performing just happened to be seniors and knew



Senior Tyler Owens DJing at Shalerpalooza 2016 (Dale Mangold)

her personally. So we thought about starting a scholarship in her name. We spoke with the family and thought maybe we could have the first Shalerpalooza in her name as well. I decided to turn it into a fundraiser and we donated all the money earned towards her scholarship," Mangold said.

Now, the concert is an event to raise money for class funds for grades 9-12. Each year, Shalerpalooza raises approximately \$4000 with about 300-400 people in attendance.

The concert itself requires preparation and time. Planning the event in late November. The rental of Mr. Smalls costs about \$1200, including lights, sound, staff and security. Advertising and t-shirts cost about \$300. Luckily, Mangold receives lots of help from the community. Hardee's, Opus One Productions and

VFW post 9199 are all contributing sponsors.

Tickets for the show are sold at the activities office for \$8 and at the door of the show for \$10. T-shirts are also for sale for \$10 or 3 for \$24 if pre ordered. T-shirts are available at activities or you can order them directly with Dale.

Mangold and all the performers worked extremely hard practicing and organizing this year's concert. If you have never attended before, this year would be the perfect opportunity.

"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

“Participhobia” takes a toll on student body

by Shannon O’Leary

Shaler Area offers nearly 50 different clubs and activities throughout the school year, covering a multitude of interests and hobbies. You would think that because of this, participation among students would be through the roof; however students and faculty have witnessed the degenerative epidemic of “participhobia”, the fear of participating, spreading throughout the building.

Everyone says that your high school years will be “the best time of your life”. For students who make the most of their time here, that may be true. As for students who do nothing it seems that they are the ones constantly preaching their disdain toward the school, but avoid getting involved in anything.

Getting involved in extra-curricular activities is one of the primary ways students can enhance the high school experience. Whether it be through clubs, sports teams, musical or the variety of options available, there are ways for each individual to do something of interest after school.

These interests ultimately establish connections to the school, but far too often students run out of the building when the final bell rings and head home without looking back.

I am by no means naïve enough to say that stu-

dents don’t have other things going on after school or during the evening. Teenagers work after school, others catch up on sleep, and some have to watch younger siblings.

But going home every day and staying away from other students makes the high school experience miserable for everyone. There are no new personal relationships being made and no fun things being done during the short four years we have here at high school.

As I said before, the decline is evident. There have been significant declines in numbers for the Future Teachers of America, Future Business Leaders of America, and Ecology Club, just to name a few.

The Outdoors Club has yet to go spelunking this year due to lack of interest, and last year it was unable to go snow tubing. Recently, the once popular Ski and Snowboarding Club has gone from filling two full buses with participants to cancelling trips after not even being able to fill just one.

Homecoming is one of students’ favorite events throughout the school year, yet if it weren’t for a small number of students, it would not happen. Yet, the students who sit back and ignore the reminders of float construction and the activities leading up to homecoming *expect* that event to occur every year. If it didn’t, they would be the first ones to complain.

If clubs or sports aren’t for you, there are constant volunteer opportunities in the Activities office every single week! Volunteering doesn’t mean picking up garbage off the side of the road; some of the opportunities can actually be made fun, like Freshmen Orientation, Animal Friends, or even the Special Olympics.

For the freshmen, this is the first opportunity to try new things. You have so many chances in front of you, why not do something worthwhile? And for the seniors, this is your final chance to interact with people and participate in events.

Getting involved benefits everyone. It benefits the sponsor teacher because he/she can finally execute all of the plans and ideas he/she has for the organization. It benefits the students already involved because they meet new people and get more opportunities. Most importantly, it benefits the newbies, who can finally look back at their time in high school and refrain from saying “I wish I would’ve done that when I had the chance”.

More than anything this new trend is just frustrating. Teachers see it, students see it, so when will kids finally reverse it and decide to get involved? I sure hope more people take advantage of these opportunities before there are no opportunities to take advantage of.

Inauguration — from page 1

music. It was like a dance party,” Snyder said.

There were plenty of other protests that were not quite as light-hearted.

Photojournalist Nikole Kost went to the inauguration on a free-lance assignment from the Tribune Review to photograph people from Pittsburgh in Washington, D.C. and “anything crazy that happened.” In doing so, Kost ended up in the middle of a protest that was eventually broken up by police.

“We went to the ceremony and listened to him get sworn in which was really cool,” she said. “Instead of staying for the parade I decided to leave and and go (photograph) protests.”

“I found this protest and started chasing it. I saw them knocking garbage cans over, which is what it started with. Then they started smashing windows. They all had masks on which was really creepy. Being a photojournalist, I started running towards it. Next thing I saw were cops running (towards us),” Kost said. “I was so scared I was going to get arrested because the cops were going to think I was part of the protest.”

While Kost was not arrested, the group had planned for the possibility that someone might be arrested.

“We actually checked with the university before and they said were willing to post bail for us, depending on what we were detained for,” Popichak said.

Even though she was not arrested, Kost got plenty of first-hand experience with what it’s like to be part of a violent protest in which the police intervene.

“I can tell you what tear gas feels like,” she said. “If you ever put hot sauce in your eyes and then fire in your lungs, that’s what tear gas feels like.”

She said, “(The police) had little squirt guns. They looked like little Nerf squirt guns. I saw the liquid come out. I didn’t get hit directly with it. Thank God because I can’t imagine what that would feel like. After they shot it, it came back because the wind was blowing (toward us) and went right in my face. I nearly collapsed, it was terrible.”

After the protest was eventually broken, Kost found herself in a McDonald’s bathroom amidst the chaos taking place in the streets.

“I went to a McDonald’s and flushed my eyes out and I sat there and just reevaluated my life. Is this what I want to do with my life? I don’t know,” Kost said.

In addition to being hit with tear gas, Kost was also thrown down by police earlier in the day. She was trying to take picture at a pro-marijuana rally, when a formation of police officers stormed the security checkpoint that was crowded as people were trying to get to the parade route.

“As I was taking this picture, I felt two hands on my back. I got picked up and thrown like a ragdoll. He told me to get out of the way, then they stormed the (security) checkpoint because it was so out of control. It was pretty scary,” she said.

Kost captured multiple pictures of a day that were published in both the Tribune Review and The Globe.

“It was fun. My feet were sore and my eyes hurt til the next day,” Kost said. “It was crazy. I loved every second of it.”

“Off Script” informs about drug dangers

by Maura Fisher and Tanner Nowakowski

The Saltworks Theater Company performed for the Shaler Area High School students on Thursday, January 26th. The company is a non-profit organization that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children and families in the north eastern region of the country.

“Off Script” was a play about drug addiction. It told 3 different true stories about how people became addicted to drugs. The people in the stories were just everyday people, and this reinforced their point that addiction can happen to anybody. The actors in the show were Karter Schachner, Kevin Moore, Andy Hickly, Kayleigh Rozwat, and Paige Moody.

“Scaring people doesn’t work, so informing people is what we want to do,” actor Kevin Moore said. “You guys are at the age where it’s up to you to make healthy decisions for yourself.”

One student, played by Andy Hickly, was an athlete with social anxiety. When he tore his ACL in a soccer game, he found that painkillers stopped not only his physical pain, but his social anxiety as well. Another student, played by Kayleigh Rozwat, was an honors student who tried adderall once to help her focus, and found that it was very addictive. The third student, played by Karter Schachner, mixed alcohol with opiates, which resulted in the student’s death.

The goal of this production was to raise awareness and to educate the students about the dangers of opioid and prescription drug abuse. The school district decided that this was an important issue to address, as drug abuse is a growing epidemic.

“We hope that our community will continue to be aware of the dangers of opioid and prescription drug abuse. The connection with heroin is extremely important as cases of overdose all across the country and even close to home become more prevalent,” Superintendent Sean Aiken said.

The Oracle

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The Oracle is the official student newspaper of Shaler Area High School. Although it is published by the journalism classes, one does not have to be enrolled in a class to contribute.

Opinions expressed in **The Oracle** are those of the individual writers. Letters to the Editor are encouraged and welcome. Any letter intended for publication must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Articles and letters may be mailed to the high school (ATTN: The Oracle) or emailed to oracle@sasd.k12.pa.us.

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

Students give back through The Memory Project

by Bridget Nickel

The Memory Project gives high school art students across the country opportunity to give back using their talents. Each student receives a picture of a child from underprivileged countries around the world. The student then paints the picture of the child and sends it back to them.

The idea of The Memory Project came to creator Ben Schumaker in 2003 while he was volunteering in Guatemala. Schumaker wanted to give the children self-portraits to keep and cherish for the rest of their lives. Knowing they didn't have many photographic memories, he wanted to give them something from their childhood that they could keep. The Memory Project officially came to life.

The Memory Project has been part of the Shaler Area art curriculum for eight years. The idea was brought to Mr. David Boyles, who teaches Studio Art 1-3 and AP Art, by one of his fellow colleagues. After hearing of it, Boyles did further research and contacted Ben Schumaker to become involved.

"This project is completely voluntary. Usually students in Studio Art 3 and AP Art are the ones who participate, but there have been exceptional students who choose to volunteer and do this who don't even take an art class," Boyles said.

There is not a required medium for the students to use, but they tend to use acrylic paint, oil paint or colored pencils to make the portraits as realistic as possible. Although the students were assigned to paint a portrait based off the photographs they received, they were still permitted to add special touches to each painting. The child's favorite color was included with his/her picture so that the artist could incorporate it somehow whether it was the color of the background or even the color of their shirt.

"The project was difficult because it was hard to match the child's features exactly, but in the end it was rewarding. My girl's favorite color was red so I made her shirt red to make it a little more special," junior Claire Schreiber said.

The students spend up to about three weeks on the project, but are not allowed to form a connection



Photograph of a girl from India with her painted portrait in 2015

with their child through things such as writing letters or sending things other than the portrait. Similarly, the student doing the piece is only permitted to include his/her first name to discourage money donation requests.

This year's edition of The Memory Project is slightly different for students at Shaler Area. The students usually receive photographs from orphans in third world countries that have included Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Honduras. This year the students are making portraits of refugees. A few years ago, the students had Ugandan refugees to make portraits of, but this year it's Syrian refugees living in Jordan.

"The topic of Syrian refugees is all over the news and is always being televised. The students are more aware of what's going on which makes them that much more engaged," said Boyles.

This is also an opportunity for charity at Shaler Area High School. The National Art Honor Society pays \$15 for each picture they receive which goes

right back to The Memory Project to cover the costs of shipping, printing, delivery and supplies along with donations that go to the children.

"This also lets them know someone somewhere cares about them, which is really special. It might be the only personal item they really have," Boyles said.

Throughout the duration of the project, the students start to see as a very emotional and humbling experience.

"Having the chance to paint a child from a third world country makes me realize how lucky I really am. I get so excited for this project each year because something so little makes these kids really happy and that's what it's all about," senior Kelly Lazaro, said.

The Memory Project records videos of each child receiving their portrait, then creates a montage of the different video clips. The montages are sent out to the people who created the portraits. Along with the slideshow, each child takes a picture with their portrait which is sent, too.

"My favorite thing about this is seeing the students' faces watching the video of the child receiving the portraits they created. It opens their eyes and gives them an opportunity to view the world outside of Shaler and shows what impact something like this can have on someone," Boyles said.

Although the outcomes are usually exciting and happy, some children never receive a portrait. Once while creating portraits for an orphanage in Africa, some children were abducted by the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) and probably turned into child soldiers. The children may never receive their portraits, but the orphanage holds on to them if they ever get the chance to return.

The reactions to the paintings seem to vary by age. According to The Memory Project website, "Young children are most noticeably thrilled to receive them. They hold their portraits proudly and show them to everyone around. Teenagers usually prefer to receive their portraits privately. They often hang their portraits in their lockers and share them with close friends."

"I think it's a great thing to do and I'm happy we continue to do it. It was nice to see how many students participated," says Lazaro. "It was a big part of my high school art career and I'm excited to hear back from the organization to see how excited my girl was about her portrait."

Many factors involved in delay and cancellation decisions

by Maura Fisher and Sarah Hefferin

Every school district is different when it comes to calling delays and cancellations. The superintendents have to consider many different factors when making the decision. For Shaler Area, some of these factors include the weather, the transportation companies, and road conditions.

Superintendent Mr. Sean Aiken is in his second year on the job, and therefore still new to the Shaler decision making process.

"It's one of the most challenging decisions that we make as superintendents because half of the people are going to think that you should call a delay or a cancellation, and the other half of the people are going to think that you shouldn't call it," Aiken said.

The superintendents of Fox Chapel, Hampton, North Hills, North Allegheny, Pine Richland, Avonworth, Northgate, and Shaler communicate with each other when considering a delay or cancellation.

Unfortunately, there is no set temperature that will automatically result in a delay. A safe number to assume is -10°, but Aiken also has to consider windchill and road condition. Aiken consults a weather condition chart, made by the National Weather Center. If the weather is predicted to get worse later in the morning, with snow or ice accumulation, and if a delay would not help the safety situation, a cancellation would be called. However, Aiken tries to avoid cancellations because it takes away time in the classroom.

This year in particular, Aiken has several "make-up" days in the schedule that the school could use to make up for cancellations so they don't have to go further into June. But due to the mild winter, Shaler Area has not had any cancel-

lations so far.

Another thing that the superintendent has to take into account is whether or not the transportation companies are available. The cold weather affects the buses in the same way it would affect a car. Also, the most important aspect is that bus drivers have to get to the buses from their homes, and if they are not able to do that, there will most likely be a delay or cancellation.

Aiken has to look at the roads of Shaler, Etna, Millvale, and Reserve early in the morning to check and see if they are driveable. With high schoolers driving, it becomes even more important to know the condition of the roads as early as possible. The salting situation is different in Reserve. Reserve doesn't have as many trucks as the others, therefore the salting process takes longer. This makes the delay decision difficult because the students are already coming to school before the final decision has been made. Aiken tries to have a final decision before 6 in the morning.

On a normal day, Aiken starts his day the same way as anybody would, but on days where he has to decide to call a two hour delay, his morning starts as early as 3 a.m. At this point, Aiken would be dealing with parents and students contacting him and discussing whether or not he should consider delaying school with the other superintendents in the northern Pittsburgh area. They work together and relay any messages regarding the situation.

The most important thing to Aiken is student safety. Whether he calls a delay or not, there are always different opinions.

"If we don't call a delay and there's an accident on the road, people are always going to remember that. But if you call a two hour delay and people are angry that you called a two hour delay they'll forget about that within 24 hours," Aiken said, "You're never going to make everybody happy, but we just want to make the best decision and make sure the students are safe."

"It's important for us to protect instructional time. I think it sends a message that we value school."

-- Superintendent Sean Aiken

2012 grad immerses herself in opportunities

Will be owner of Pittsburgh's first cat cafe, inspired by her travels and her love for cats

by Kaitlin Parente & Gabi Girton

Shaler Area graduate Indigo Baloch has been very busy since her graduation in 2012. Between being involved in a multitude of clubs at Chatham University and having several "out of this world" experiences, Indigo is also in the process of opening Pittsburgh's very first cat cafe, The Black Cat Market, and plans to graduate from Chatham University this spring.

Before enrolling at Chatham, Indigo took a "gap year" and traveled to Romania, a trip sponsored by the Rotary Foundation, to learn Romanian and attend conferences and events.

However, Indigo's experience did not go quite as planned.

"I got kicked out of Romania. I didn't know it could happen but I did it," she said. "(My host) family would leave for days and that was one of the reasons I asked for a new host family."

She got in touch with the Rotary Foundation in United States to request a new host family, but she didn't realize what that would lead to.

"The dad of the family that I was with was in charge of the Rotary. He came home one day and said, 'If you don't like my family you can leave the country. You have a week to leave.'" Indigo said.

After being kicked out of Romania, Indigo enrolled in Chatham University to study Creative Writing.

However, in freshman year, she took a journalism class where her teacher told her she should consider an editor position with the school newspaper.

"Second semester of my freshman year I took over the paper. That took over mostly the next year of my life. Then, last year, I took over "Her Campus" which is kind of similar to BuzzFeed with online content, but it's especially directed towards women. It's a lot of beauty articles and things like that," Indigo said.

Indigo's schedule did not lighten up over that summer because she was able to intern for "WHIRL".

"The summer after my freshman year I got an internship at "WHIRL" magazine, which was really great. I was doing fashion editorials, and let me tell you, there is nothing like being able to walk into any store and say, 'I want that, that, and that, bag it up!'" she said.

Her experiences while working at "WHIRL" proved to be more beneficial than just a quick summer internship.

"My sophomore year, my professor from my journalism class reached out to me with an opportunity with a newer magazine in Pittsburgh that was just coming together that needed some more people on the staff, so, I became the editorial assistant of "Maniac" magazine," Indigo said.

Not only have her journalism writings been published, but many of her poems are receiving recognition as well.

"My poems have been published in a couple different things. I am actually accepting an award for one next week at Carnegie Mellon University. I have also read at the International English Honor Society," she said.

And if you think that Indigo couldn't possibly have enough time to do anything else, you'd be mistaken. She is also in 14 clubs with leadership positions in each.

"At this point I am in charge of four student organizations. I am on the board of 10 others, which is really overwhelming. But, it's also really stimulating and keeps me really on my toes. I also still do creative writing and graphic design. I am currently the editor-in-chief of the literary magazine at Chatham," Indigo said.

A lot of those things will change when she graduates in the spring and so she has already considered the question, "What will I do with the rest of my



life?"

"My business partner, Olivia Ciotoli, and I were talking about it. Our big interest is cats. I was sitting there with her big cat and we were like, 'We really love cats, how can we work with them and find them homes?' In Pittsburgh, especially during the spring, the numbers of stray cats really skyrocket," she said. "We [realized] we were doing a lot of charity shows and fundraising for animal shelters and we sort of had one of those nights where you're thinking, 'Okay, I'm in my 20's, what am I going to do with my life?'" Indigo said.

The idea for the The Black Cat Market, a cafe with a separate room where patrons can not only interact with, but also adopt, cats, was born.

Olivia and Indigo did not cut any corners during the initial planning process. Indigo went to Japan and Southeast Asia, home of many cat cafes, and met with multiple owners to inspire and guide her.

"I would go to a lot of cat cafes and talk to the owners--ask questions and stuff like that. Everyone that I talked to was really enthusiastic about meeting another cat cafe owner, especially an American one so they were great about answering questions for me and giving me really good advice," Indigo said.

The best piece of advice that Indigo received was from a cat cafe owner in Taiwan.

"He was one of the people who really encouraged us to reach out to people and other businesses. He was really the one who suggested we use things from other local businesses and friends who had small businesses. I really kept that in mind. It was great to work with other local businesses," she said.

In addition to strangers in foreign lands, the two had two valuable resources much closer to home.

"(Olivia's and my mom) are small business owners so we started asking them. It came down to really if you want to make something happen, you can. You just need to have the drive to be asking people and researching things," Indigo said.

When it came down to where Indigo and Olivia would get their cats, they both looked around for an animal shelter that met all of their moral standards.

"We wanted to work with the Animal Rescue League because it is a no kill shelter. Because of that, they are always running out of room. One way to combat that is through outside adoption," Indigo said.

Because they decided to go through the Animal Rescue League, The Black Cat Cafe will be able to accommodate in-store adoption. Both Indigo and Olivia have gone through the training requirements to help future cat parents bring home their new cat(s).

"[Animal Rescue League] has a screening process in place for cats that can be together in a space because they have a cat room where they can interact and play together. They would be making sure they're in good health, have their shots and making sure they're fixed so that they can't harm or affect each other negatively," Olivia said.

While the focus for many will be on the feline residents at the cafe, that is not the only goal for the Black Cat Market. Not only did Indigo's travels to Japan help shape the idea for her business, but it will help shape some of the things that will be part of the cafe and the community.

"We are planning on doing a lot of programming with the Japanese community in Pittsburgh. There's actually a Japanese flower arrangement called ikebana and we're planning on trying to have a display area for the Ikebana Society of Pittsburgh and hold events

for the Japanese community," Indigo said.

Along with offering opportunities for activities within the Japanese community, Indigo hopes to have additional classes and therapy options prepared for after the initial opening of the cafe.

"We have expressed interest in pet therapy workshops, especially for things that are really important to us like victims of sexual assault or domestic violence, pet therapy can be really helpful. We have been contacted by a lot of local professional psychologists who wanted to work with us," Indigo said. "Looking towards the future, we want to do events having to do with organizations like Pittsburgh Action Against Rape. We're just really trying to reach out to the community and make a safe space for people,"

Indigo and Olivia are hopeful to open the cafe within the next few months.

"We were aiming for late January to beginning of February because we have to do some construction so hopefully, if everything goes to plan...sometime in early 2017 is the general statement we're going with now," Olivia said.

Even though this process has been stressful for the young owners, they have been able to maintain a calm, yet excited facade thanks to help from the community.

"For a lot of our big purchases, we worried about costs. If you know anything about espresso machines, they are so expensive, thousands of dollars. We got ours for \$500 from a fan that messaged us," Indigo said.

They also received help from local business owners in Lawrenceville who were able to give generous contributions to the cafe including a coffee grinder and a coffee brewer.

"It's been absolutely ridiculous, but wonderful and it's just people reaching out to us," Indigo said.

The cafe will offer a variety of drinks including regular coffee and specialty coffee drinks, as well as a variety of tea and baked goods.

The tea will be provided by Three Rivers Tea company, based in Pittsburgh, and the coffee from Grounds and Hounds, which is also local.

They especially wanted to support this coffee brand because Grounds and Hounds donates 20% of their profits to a charity of choice, and The Black Cat Market chose Animal Rescue League.

"Every cup of coffee that you buy goes right back to The Animal Rescue League. Not only are you helping the cats by like coming and interacting with them, but you are also helping by coming and getting a cup of coffee," Indigo said.

Two SA students travel to Israel with local church

by Cece Robinson

Over winter break senior Bridget Stack and junior Andrew Lesnett traveled across the country of Israel. While on their trip they experienced new food, explored ancient ruins, and swam in the Dead Sea.

Traveling with the Elfin-wild Presbyterian Church, they started their journey with a short one hour flight from Pittsburgh to Newark, NJ, and from there a ten hour flight to Tel Aviv, Israel. The group flew into the Tel Aviv Airport and was “welcomed” into the country with armed men at every gate.

“Tel Aviv airport is said to be one of the safest airports in the world. Multiple TSA agents have to verify your passport. There was even a man who they gave a hard time getting through security because the metal detector went off because he had both hips replaced and didn’t have paperwork to verify,” Stack said.

A scary moment that occurred during their stay in the Middle East was the faint sound of gun fire a few miles away from their hotel.

“We stayed in Tiberius for the first 3 days of the trip. Where we were staying was about 8-10 miles from where the Israelis and the Syrians were fighting. At times we were able to hear gunshots, which is pretty scary knowing how close you are to a war zone,” Stack said.

The following days began with a 6 a.m. wake-up call followed by a bus call at 7:15 a.m. From here each of their days would be filled with visiting new sights every day. Many ruins throughout the country were visited including famous sights such The West Bank of Israel, The Ruins of Caesarea, and The Dead Sea.

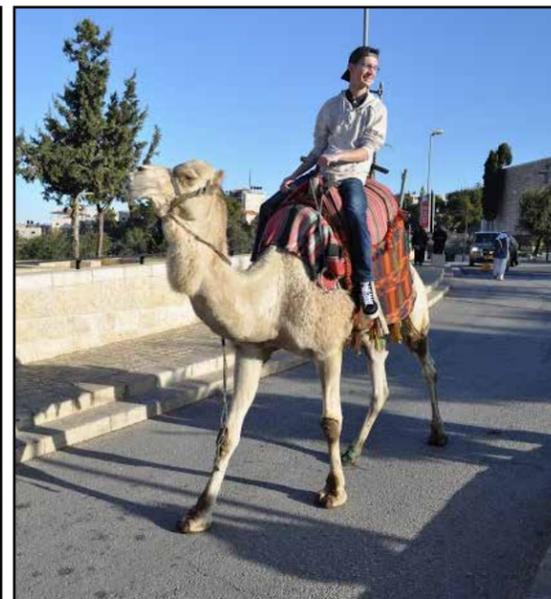
“Caesarea was a town on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea that King Herod the Great originally built. He created one of the most vibrant port towns in all of Israel. The ruins were amazing to see. We saw everything from amphitheaters to hippodromes, and the coolest thing was most of the structures were all originally dated back to over 2000 years ago,” Lesnett said.

After arriving at their site for the day they would often stop at little coffee shops or local eating places for lunch, then, continue sightseeing until they would head back home, arriving around 5 p.m. Dinner would begin at 6:30 p.m.

“My favorite thing to eat was probably the fresh pita bread with humus. My



Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Bridget Stack)



Andrew Lesnett riding a camel (Bridget Stack)

least favorite thing that I ate was the Saint Peters Fish. They don’t even take out the bones or shave the scales off,” Stack said.

Stack, who also went on an Italy trip last summer, was amazed by the differences the two countries had in their architecture, culture, and the history that resonated in each of the places she visited.

“My favorite part of the trip was seeing the different culture(s) and religions. The “West Bank” is a part of Israel where the Palestinians live. There is a wall in most parts separating the two areas, but it was very interesting to see how the two groups interacted, well lack thereof. It was also very fascinating to see all the churches because there is nothing like them here, and they were very different from the ones I saw in Italy. We also visited the Holocaust museum in Israel, which being in the area where most of the Jewish population lives, really allows you to feel,” Stack said.

One of the most memorable things Lesnett said to have experienced was swimming in the Dead Sea. What makes this unlike any other body of water is that it is the 5th saltiest place in the world. No fish or any wildlife live in this body of water because of the harsh environment it provides. Because the salt concentration in the water is 33.7% (8.6x saltier than the ocean), it makes it impossible for you to fully emerge yourself under the water.

“The coolest thing that I got to experience was the Dead Sea! It was the coolest thing ever because you really do float, it is impossible to not float. You can’t control it, it just happens,” Lesnett said.

Both Stack and Lesnett were grateful for this once in a life time experience and will never forget the memories they created during their trip.

Senior Dan Bittner lands a role in a local opera

by Kaitlin Parente

Senior Dan Bittner, known for his leading roles in Shaler Area school plays and musicals, recently participated in the opera “Amahl and the Night Visitors” through Resonance Works, a Pittsburgh performing arts company.

“Amahl and the Night Visitors” which was performed December 16 and 18 at the Third Presbyterian Church in Shadyside, is about a young disabled boy and his mother who encounter three kings.

Bittner first learned about the role when a voice instructor at Carnegie Mellon mentioned the opportunity.

“Resonance Works was in need of baritones and after a voice lesson with one of the cast members I was recommended to work in the production. Within the show I was part of the opera chorus. My title was a shepherd,” Bittner said.

However, the transition from a musical, to which he is more accustomed, to an opera did have difficult aspects to it.

“It was an awesome experience, though it was very different from musical theater. I learned several classical singing techniques as well as a lot of tips on how to act and sing within an opera,” Bittner said. “Opera is different from musicals because it is all singing, though the music tends to be more intricate and technical. Rehearsals mainly consist of learning the music and defining the technique, where as a musical consists of dance and heavy blocking as well, which is the acting and placement of scenes.”

While Bittner enjoys any form of theater, he’s

still undecided as to which form he prefers best.

“It depends on the scenario and the shows have their pluses and contain beautiful music,” Bittner said.

Even though Bittner’s first opera experience has come to an end, he continues to keep busy with the start of the musical season and his training.

“I spend at least an hour or two a day learning lines, music or developing a character. During the week for musical we have two and a half hour practices. On top of that I spend time at home reviewing my notes and lessons from rehearsal. Singing shows like “Les Miserables” takes a lot of stamina and breath control so running a few miles a day at home really helps my breath control,” Bittner, who plays Jean Valjean in “Les Miserables”, said. “It is quite difficult to keep a strong voice for these shows especially when singing a role like Jean Valjean. The music is heavy and if you approach it with improper technique you will destroy your voice.”

However, Bittner’s training is designed for much more than his part in Shaler Area’s musical.



“Training for the performing arts takes a lot. I have been taking vocal lessons for several years and taking acting classes. Working alongside new directors, vocal coaches and teachers is very fun and exciting, though it is very tiring,” Bittner said.

Pre-colleges are also a part of Bittner’s schedule.

“I went to the pre-colleges offered at Baldwin Wallace and Muskingum University over the summer. I learned acting techniques, breathing techniques, ways to approach and hit notes, and ways to interpret plays and music to make them original as well as act them out correctly,” Bittner said.

However, Bittner’s theatrical career won’t end when his time at Shaler does. Bittner has been preparing for his life after high school by getting ready for auditions for the past four years.

“The audition process is very exciting, yet stressful due to the fact you could get sick beforehand, so health is a number one priority,” Bittner said. “Memorizing and rehearsing monologues, learning songs and going through the audition motions takes time and effort, though it’s always worth it in the end.”

Bittner is currently undecided as to where he will attend school next year, but he hopes to obtain a degree in musical theater or vocal performance.

“I am auditioning for Carnegie Mellon, Juilliard, Baldwin Wallace University, Duquesne University, Pennsylvania State University, Shenandoah University, Point Park University and I am waiting to hear back from the Curtis Institute of Music,” he said.

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Senior represents U.S. at World Junior Tournament

by Tim Templin

While most kids were sitting at home enjoying their holiday break, senior Jake Taylor was in Harrisburg trying out for the national ball hockey team. He hopes to have another chance to represent the United States and play in the World Junior Ball Hockey Championship.

Ball hockey is no different than ice hockey in that all the rules are the same with only two major differences: instead of a puck, a ball is used and the players run instead of skate.

"I began playing ball hockey at Etna Deck Hockey when I was younger. I've been playing in-house and travel for six years now. Tournaments were all local but now we travel to different states and even Canada," Taylor said.

In the summer of 2015 Taylor went to his first try out for the U.S. Under 18 team. He, along with 120 others, went to New Jersey at an invite only tryout, fighting for 18 roster spots.

"Tryouts were intense. It was a three-day event and most of the tryouts were held outside in 95 degrees. Two people passed out. There were 200 people trying out so when we got out there to play we had to put everything into every second we were on the rink," Taylor said.

Initially, Taylor did not make the team.

"I felt cheated out of the spot to be honest. I knew a few kids that made the team that didn't have the heart, passion, or talent level I did. But once I heard that I could go tryout again for the team I made sure to make the statement of a lifetime. I went out there with the mindset that it could be my last chance ever to play the sport at that level," Taylor said.

Then his fortunes changed after various injuries and a bit of good luck, Taylor was given a roster spot.

"I felt honored and knew I had a huge opportunity when I got the letter in the mail stating I made the U18 roster. However, it really didn't hit me until I was over in England," Taylor said.

After Taylor was selected in the fall of 2015 the team then had fewer than nine months to prepare for the world tournament. This team brought kids from New Jersey, Boston, and Pittsburgh for this tournament that was going to be held in Sheffield, England.

"Sheffield was very different, no TV stations, there were really no cars and everyone rode a train, the team had to ride one every morning for games.



Jake Taylor on the rink in the 2016 Bronze Medal Game

Sheffield had some restaurants, but not many. It was weird. They didn't take American currency so the money was hard to handle, also the waiters don't accept tips. One of the coolest parts about the food was McDonald's and all the different food choices that we can't get here. They have a lot of chicken and not too many hamburgers. They serve their drinks without ice and they didn't have very much cheese. It was a pretty cool experience," Taylor said.

For a while Taylor and the rest of the USA players felt like celebrities in England.

"I met this man and told him I was from Pittsburgh and he brought me to talk to his family. They were all so intrigued to hear about someone who lived in the same city the 2016 Stanley Cup champions were from. That's when I really appreciated where I came from. It made me realize how lucky I truly am to be blessed enough to live here," Taylor said.

During the tournament the U18 team had a tough schedule facing teams such as Canada, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. USA defeated Great Britain by a score of 6-1 and then played Switzerland for a chance to play in the Bronze Medal game. U.S. defeated Switzerland 1-0 and advanced to the Bronze medal game.

"The best feeling about the whole tournament

was the playing of the U.S. National Anthem after we beat Switzerland to get into the Bronze Medal game," Taylor said.

Unfortunately the U.S. fell short in the Bronze Medal game against Czech Republic by a score of 4-1.

"It felt so gratifying on the rink wearing the USA across my chest and when I went on a breakaway (although I didn't score) the crowd chanted USA to me after I changed the momentum hitting the post in the Bronze Medal game. In addition to the entire U16 Switzerland team chanting my name and USA chants because they

had so much respect for the United States, I ended up having more goals and points than the captain in the tournament," Taylor said.

Although the tournament ended without the USA team getting a medal, ball hockey is still growing around the Pittsburgh area and across the U.S.

"I tried out with 5 kids from Pittsburgh; luckily we all made the team. So I think it's safe to say that Pittsburgh is the powerhouse of ball hockey in America," Taylor said.

Ball hockey has exploded in the Pittsburgh area in recent years as the Mario Lemieux Foundation built multiple rinks around Pittsburgh to gain awareness and get people out to play.

Over the holiday break Taylor went to Harrisburg, and tried out for the U20 USA team. This is his last chance to play in the world junior tournament. After a player ages out of the world juniors then he can try and play for the men's U.S. national team. There will be one more try out for the U20 team held in Pittsburgh before the team is chosen in September.

"I believe ball hockey is on the rise here in America. I'm excited to see where ball hockey can go in the future and hopefully we can bring back the gold medal from Switzerland in 2018," Taylor said.

Softball gives senior chance to see the world

by Shannon O'Leary

Recently, senior Kayla Seidl had the opportunity of a lifetime playing the sport she loves across the world. From January 11 to January 18, she spent a week in the Netherlands and surrounding countries with the North American Cup Softball Team.

After being part of a showcase for the Queen of Diamonds Organization, she was recognized for her talent by the organization, which also happened to be the organization that runs the Cup team. After receiving the invitation to travel and play with this team via email, her reaction was purely ecstatic, naturally.

"I was just speechless. I showed my parents and was just so shocked; I didn't even know how to respond. It was definitely an opportunity I did not want to pass up," Seidl said.

As for preparing for this tournament, she and her team only had one opportunity to practice together in September during the actual Queen of Diamonds Showcase in South Carolina. Even then, it wasn't a very promising practice, considering some of her teammates were not even present.

Having teammates from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, it made complicated to congregate the group of girls. Because of this, Seidl spent a lot of time practicing on her own.

"I just had to do a lot of practicing on my own, which was usually hitting down in my basement. I knew we were going to be playing national teams and they were going to be good so I knew I needed to do the best I could to help my team," she said.

As for the tournament experience, there were teams from the Netherlands, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, and four other teams from the United States. Because of this, Seidl had the opportunity to see the diversity of how the sport is played in countries other than the United States.

She made a lot of friends on her team, some of which she intends to stay in touch with, as well as relationships with some European teams' girls. Her team practiced the tradition of exchanging gifts with the first played European team, giving them gift bags with items from each of the girls' cities.



Kayla Seidl (bottom right) with her teammates

Cont. on page 8

Hard work pays off for top-ranked D'amico

by Tom Castello

Senior Ron D'amico, is becoming very well known in the wrestling world. D'amico who posts a 28-1 record and is ranked first for the 220 weight pound class in the WPIAL this season, has been showing great signs of continuing his wrestling career at the collegiate level next year.

D'amico has had great success this year in wrestling. His senior year, has been arguably his best.

With years of wrestling under his belt, I asked D'amico if his success comes off of somewhat of an experience factor.

"Yes and no, this past year I just worked my butt off and wanted to get better," said D'amico.

Shaler Area wrestling coach Drew D'agostino, has also seen D'amico working very hard to get where he is now.

"Ron worked really hard during the offseason. He spent a lot of time in the weight room and wrestling room and now his efforts are paying dividends. It's not a tough formula, work harder than everyone else, be confident and believe in your abilities. So far this year Ron has mastered all three tenets of success." D'agostino said.

He started off the year great with a couple wins during team matches. Then during his individual performance at the X-Calibur tournament, D'amico placed first in his weight class.

"Winning the X-Calibur tournament was awesome. It's a pretty tough tournament and knowing I won was a great feeling. That tournament was also the first varsity tournament I have won."

In addition to the stress of wrestling, D'amico also deals with the stress of college recruiting during the season. However D'amico is more focused on the wrestling end and finishing out his senior season.

"College recruiting is stressful, but I try not to focus on it too much. I just want to finish the season." he said.

D'amico is getting looks from schools such as the Uni-



Senior Ron D'amico

versity of Pittsburgh, the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Gannon University, Waynesburg University, and a few more. They see how much he has improved and the great wrestler he has become over the years.

Pitt Johnstown, according to NCAA.com, was ranked number two in the nation in the power rankings for Division II schools as of December 2016. This just shows how good D'amico is. Top ranked wrestling schools are watching his matches and looking at him to possibly become a member of their team.

D'amico's only loss this year came on his senior night against North Allegheny wrestler Jake Woodley, who is ranked number one in the WPIAL at the 195 weight class. The match was very

competitive as the final score was 3-2. Woodley is one of the nation's top wrestlers and has committed to Oklahoma to continue his wrestling career.

D'amico, disappointed in the outcome, did not get down on himself after the match. According to him, it actually motivated him to do better.

"I was a little upset knowing how close I was to beating such a good wrestler. It motivated me though. Right after my match I felt I could of been more in shape so I went out in the hallway and started doing sprints," D'amico said.

D'amico also wrestled on January 20 and 21 at the Allegheny County tournament. He ended up taking first again in his weight class.

He is looking like a contender not only for the WPIAL's but also States. His talents speak for themselves, as you can look at his success over the past few months. With such a strong record already, there is no telling the possibilities that are ahead.

"I still need to work hard and stay focused, I can't let anything bad get to my head. If I keep working hard and staying focused and continue what I have been doing, I feel like I have a great chance to be a top contender," D'amico said.

Senior sees the world

from page 7

Playing 50-minute games as shortstop against tough competition, ranging from ages 16-35, Seidl and her team placed 9th overall out of 16 teams. Then, she and her parents went on to travel with their spare time.

"The coolest part of the trip was definitely going to Paris. We spent a few days in Rotterdam/Amsterdam during the tournament part of the week and then we traveled to Paris for two days just to tour. It was incredible. The Eiffel Tower was by far my favorite part," she said.

Seidl also had the chance to see the Anne Frank house, the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre, and Notre Dame throughout the week. At each place visited, she took advantage of the opportunity to try new food, like stroopwaffles and crepes, as well as shop at the extravagant shops and boutiques.

"I actually got my prom dress in Paris from a boutique by our hotel, which is one of only five in the world. Needless to say, we were cramming stuff into our suitcases to make sure everything fit," she said.

When Seidl first started playing fast pitch softball at age 11, she never would have expected her talent to take her across the world.

"This was an absolutely incredible experience and I would do it again in a heartbeat. It's something I will never forget," she said.

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