

The Oracle

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SA grad at forefront of world health issues

by Gabi Girton & Maura Fisher

Dr. Pranav Shetty was named the Shaler Area Distinguished Alumnus for 2017. A 1999 graduate, Shetty made massive global contributions to emergency medicine and humanitarian work.

In December, Shetty returned to Shaler Area to discuss his time at the high school, and how his experiences helped shape his future plans.

"I found it to be a very enriching environment and I found that the teachers here are open to building kids resilience, attitudes and perspectives on life and their career. It's the teachers and how they conduct their class because they breed a culture and the way that class interacts with each other and interacts with the teachers and creates an open interaction and debate. I remember Mr. Davis and Mr. Rockwell doing that specifically during my time at the high school," Shetty said.

Shetty was originally born in India, but then moved to Trinidad when he was a year old. He lived there until 1991 when there was a coup that led to the army taking over the government, which led to rebels bombing the parliament.

His early childhood was filled with memories of violence, strict curfews, crime and tanks roaming the streets. So, after about eight months of living in the violence filled Trinidad, his family moved to start a safe life in the United States.

Shetty became a Shaler Area student in 7th grade, and said it was quite a culture shock compared to his life in Trinidad.

"It was really interesting because Shaler doesn't really have a lot of diversity. I think I there was only two people of Indian descent in the entire school at that time," Shetty said.

During his time at Shaler Area, he was undecided on what to study for the future, so he prepared by taking AP and Honors courses until he realized that his passion lay in the Science field.

Following his time at Shaler, Shetty attended the University of Pittsburgh to earn a degree in Neuro-

science. He completed his residency in emergency medicine at the University of California and then earned a Master's of Public Health at the University of Maryland.

Shetty traveled overseas while studying and began his work in humanitarian aid. He treated patients voluntarily in places where medical care isn't readily available. He joined the International Medical Corps in 2012.

Since then, Shetty has done incredible work internationally. He was one of the first doctors to provide aid to the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013.

He also was a lead doctor in the Ebola outbreak and helped set up hospitals in several underdeveloped African countries in 2014. His selfless work didn't stop there however, he also helped set up hospitals in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Botswana, and Ghana.

Shetty worked in Africa at one of the only Ebola camps, and helped establish order in a time of chaos.

He allowed families to safely have funerals for the victims of Ebola, something that was rarely seen in any other treatment camps. He also helped establish protocol on how to deal with the disease, since at the time no one knew the extent of what they were dealing with.

During one of his first travels with the International Medical Corps he was stationed in the Zaatari refugee camp, which is the largest Syrian refugee



Dr. Pranav Shetty, Shaler Area 2017 Distinguished Alumnus.

camp in the world, positioned in the middle of the desert in Jordan.

"I was there opening day... it's strange because it's hard to conceptualize what 50,000 people look like until you actually see them, and you actually see the tents. It was in the middle of the desert in Jordan and it was August so it was easily over 100 degrees, and it was sandy and people were just finding a patch of sand and putting up their tents. It just goes to show the ingenuity of people, humans are humans, they will find a way to survive," Shetty said.

In another situation when Shetty was stationed in Greece he talked about how surreal it was to be in such a beautiful place, and to still be seeing tragedies.

"I was stationed on an island in Greece, and right across the river are refugees coming in from boats,

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New dance policy hopes to deter unwanted behavior

by Cece Robinson

The date for the anticipated Sadie Hawkins Dance is Feb. 10, but that date almost never came about because of what happened at the Homecoming dance. The idea of not having a Sadies dance was one that was given serious thought after some of incidents at the Homecoming dance.

When the dance was over, the school board was faced with the decision for Sadies, whether to cut it out completely or to implement stricter dance rules.

Activities Director Mrs. Mindy Thiel looked for answers from schools in the surrounding area and from our own student body. During a series of homeroom representative meetings, brainstorming activities were conducted on how to better deter undesirable behavior from happening again.

After months of discussion and editing, a document was finally drawn up. The document was passed around

"We are also going to have parents be chaperones, we are asking for 10 volunteers... So many things about Homecoming were blown out of proportion, I want parents to come and see this is not some kind of frat party."

**-- Mrs. Mindy Thiel
Activities Director**

to all the Homecoming chaperones for their thoughts and feedback on how to handle upcoming dances.

The decision was made to not cancel the Sadie Hawkins Dance, but to implement a new policy where participants and parents will be required to sign a contract before any dance.

Thiel answered some of our questions to help clarify what students should expect at Sadies and other dances in the future.

What solution did you come up with to deter the homecoming infractions?

We have come up with a dance contract. After Homecoming I spent sometimes looking at other schools dance regulations. And it turns out a lot of schools have contracts. Mt. Lebanon was my favorite; they have a very detailed contract that we are basing our contract off of, so it's just laying everything out in print. I think part of the

problem was a lot of students didn't know there were consequences to certain behaviors. Yes, it's in the handbook. Yes, it's in school board policy, but does anyone read either of those? No. So were laying everything out in writing.

Any changes when purchasing a ticket?

In order to buy tickets for the future, you have to bring in a dance contract signed by both you and your parents in addition to your ticket and your money. The contract is letting you know all that.

What are the expectations during the dance?

You have to be in the dance within 30 minutes of the start time, but that's always been a rule. We are letting you know you'll be managed by staff, administration and police. Any drugs, alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances and contraband are not permitted.

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OPINIONS

We need to rethink how society shapes men

by Cece Robinson

This article has been sitting on my computer for months. Drafted and redrafted, pulled and picked apart, because I didn't know how to enter my voice into a realm where women aren't commonly heard.

So I figured the best way to start this is with a bold statement.

Society has deemed it "okay" for young boys and men to exhibit insensitive and callous behaviors and attitudes, especially towards women.

I believe that boys being taught at young ages to "be a man" and to "be tough" is resulting in a blind eye being turned to the destructive behaviors of men. Which are brought on by the ever so present pressures to radiate masculinity.

There, I said it.

Whether you are a teacher or student, you've probably had experiences that support this statement. Even if it might seem small, a harmless comment or maybe even an action you yourself committed, no matter what its magnitude, it has contributed to the way society shapes young boys. It seems to be expected for men to express dominant, even violent, and aggressive characteristics, while looking down upon those who express an inkling of emotional vulnerability. Being stuck in a school with more than 700 boys and teachers, there is no way these behaviors can be ignored.

Somewhere along the line, these society prescribed traits of what a man should be, have evolved. Side effects of this "prescribed medicine" are not only causing men to develop such harsh qualities, but demonstrate them in everyday life.

From the time of middle school, boys are seen "making fun" and "teasing" girls. Girls are told "if a

I believe that boys being taught at young ages to "be a man" and to "be tough" is resulting in a blind eye being turned to the destructive behaviors of men... Rethink what you/we are asking of our men and how much we're letting them get away with.

boy teases you it means they like you" and we laugh it off knowing it's not always true. As boys grow into men, that innocence of adolescence evolves into dangerous tendencies played out in early adulthood. That once playful teasing evolves into a right that men believe they have about how to treat women.

After each weekend, stories upon stories are spread around school, embellishing on what happened between a student and his companion while they were alone. Boys, "experienced" or not, worship these storytellers, eager to pass on the juicy details.

From the dissemination of these weekend stories, ideas of "what is cool and not" about how to treat women are inserted into the brains of hundreds of boys, trying to ascend the ladder of high school hierarchy. Because no redirection or correction is done to this new idea that has been planted in their heads, one innocent story becomes the foundation for their relationships to come.

Star high school athletes who become college athletes "suddenly" find themselves at the center of a rape or sexual assault case and their justification of "she wanted it" or "she never said no" is too commonly heard.

Many months ago, our very own president, a man

who is meant to embody the American people, speak for those without voices, and guide our country, was recorded saying sexually explicit and demeaning comments about women.

"Trump: 'I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything,'" said Pres. Donald Trump in a recording transcript done by the N.Y. Times.

Is this really who we are raising our men to become?

Male "locker room talk" is filled with degrading comments about women believing that these are conversations that men are "supposed" to have.

You might be thinking, "It's a guy thing" or "Boys will be boys", but is it?

We as a society need to stop instilling these detrimental qualities in our children and friends. Let's stop this plague before it truly gets out of control. Rethink what you/we are asking of our men and how much we're letting them get away with.

They are being taught that showing emotion is wrong and caring too much about a girl is unmanly and weak.

Is pushing all of our men to emulate these empathy lacking qualities worth destroying who they are and who they could possibly become?

The popular comment, "be a man" and the connotation that goes with it is more destructive than what we as society fail to realize.

So let's stop pretending that what we see and expect of men is realistic, let's stop society from allowing men to think that this is the "right" and only type of man to be, let's stop sweeping such behavior under the rug and let's be the ones who will bring about a renewed expectation of male behaviors, ending this plague of masculinity.

District should adjust calendar or midterm schedule

by Alexa Stewart

Many people are excited as winter break approaches, but what they aren't excited for are the midterms which follow immediately afterwards. Students can rarely enjoy their winter break because they have to constantly worry about studying.

The countless review packets sent home over break, 2-3 pages each, are usually said to not to be worried about until after break, but if students want to be successful, break is the time they should be completed. 3 or 4 core classes to study for, in addition to languages and other midterms, it's countless hours that's spent trying to study for a single test that's worth 10 percent of students overall grade.

Coming back from break there were three days at school to ask any and all questions you have before the midterms begin the following week. During break, students just want to relax and have a good time with their friends and families. They don't want to worry about what x2is on a graph or what ligaments are in your neck.

Break is a time meant for relaxing and unwinding before the second half of the year. In college, students take their midterms before they go on break and then come back ready to go for the next semester. Some classes in our school, like AP Euro for example, do this too.

"Having our midterm in Euro before break was most beneficial because I think we can all agree that Euro is our hardest class so we were able to spend less time worrying about it over break and spend more time studying for our other classes during the week leading up to midterms," sophomore Michael Bly said.

When asked about why midterms are placed after break, Principal Dr. Timothy Royall had a simple answer. It's where the middle of the school year lies.

"The reason midterms are so quickly after break is because over the last three years we have started to come to school sooner in August. We come to school sooner in August, we're graduating sooner. This year graduation is on the Friday of the last week of May so because we've started sooner in August then that 90 day mark gets closer to directly after break. Five years ago midterms were the third or fourth week of January so we were back from break for 2 or 3 weeks before we had our midterms," Royall said.

So should we push the start of the school year back? It would ultimately

help us in the end by giving us extra time to be able to review and retain the information we would be learning before the two weeks off and would allow the information to be fresh in our heads. Honestly I don't see the big deal in pushing graduation back a week or two.

If we started school a week later then we would still be back before Labor Day and midterms would then start January 16, not January 8. This would benefit the students as a whole and would result in more time being spent on studying for midterms.

Break is a time meant for holiday fun and shouldn't be spent worrying about midterms. It's a time to eat too much food and spend quality time with those you love and relax. In reality students often spend most of their time tucked away in their rooms studying and ignoring the holiday festivities that are taking place right underneath them.

So what's the solution? Take midterms before break? Have more time after break to prepare? Start school later and therefore get out later? The list goes on and on but nothing is being done about the problem.

We should come back to school a week later in August which would cause there to be more time between end of winter break and the start of midterms.

The Oracle

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

OPINIONS

Logan Paul's actions, videos from Japan are inexcusable

by Madison Tarlo

Jake and Logan Paul are well known on YouTube for their vlogging channels. Each boasting over 10 million followers. Jake Paul has been the name more commonly known because of all the stupid things he's done and all the drama he gets caught up in. Logan Paul is the older brother, and he's well known for his immature, asinine content, like when he posted a video on New Years Eve that has changed the way many people view him.

Paul and some of his friends were in Tokyo, Japan, and decided to head to the Aokigahara Forest also known as "The Suicide Forest". It has become a frequent destination for people to end their own lives in peace. It is estimated that 100 die in the Aokigahara "suicide" forest each year.

Paul and his friends made their way into the forest to cover the "haunted" aspect of the forest, not the death. But soon after they stepped off the trail, the downward spiral of Logan Paul's video began. They were getting ready to set up their makeshift camp area, and then Paul's face went blank.

"I think there's someone hanging right there, I'm not even (explicit) kidding," he said.

Once he noticed the man hanging, he should've turned the cameras off and called the police. Instead they picked up the cameras and called the

police after violating the dead man's privacy. They were laughing, making crude jokes, and they continued to film the man.

"What, you never stood next to a dead guy?" he said.

The video was edited and uploaded for the entire YouTube community to see. It was monetized, which allowed Paul to earn revenue from ads on the video before it was removed. It also was viewed about 6 million times. In his mind he should've known that it was wrong, but he didn't care because he knew it would help him profit.

Having an audience of young teen boys and girls, the gravity of the situation was not fully understood, and Paul even gained support from the video. He now has almost 100,000 new subscribers. That's absolutely sickening. The fact that he's able to gain from what he's done, sheds light on what kind of society we are and what we're deeming is "okay".

Paul exploited suicide. He stood in that forest on New Years Eve with his friends, and filmed someone's husband, someone's father, someone's son, someone's brother, someone's cousin, someone's friend.

He went out of his way to post a video of a man who took his own life, hanging from a tree. Even worse, he laughed about it, and then tried to say he didn't know how to cope with it. Paul needs to learn the importance of

respect.

"Me smiling and laughing is not a portrayal of how I feel about the circumstances," he said.

Anna Akana, another popular youtuber, said "That body was a person someone loved. You do not walk into a suicide forest with a camera and claim mental health awareness."

I couldn't have said this any more perfectly.

The forest is **not** a tourist attraction. When people come to Japan, the forest is not a place where they usually go. The internet glorified it and others made videos about it, not just Paul, but others didn't film a body like he did.

Paul made a joke out of Japanese culture, and what they believe in.

Let's also talk about how YouTube failed to comment for over a week. The video was posted on December 31st, YouTube spoke about it on their twitter on January 9th. A week and two days later. It said, "Like many others, we were upset by the video that was shared last week."

However, a day later, YouTube announced that they were putting it's original projects with Paul on hold, and removed him from the google preferred program, which allows brands to ad-sell on the platform.

We can't forget that Paul's entire trip to Japan was also problematic. A video compiled of different clips from each one of his vlogs that were post-

ed has recently surfaced on Twitter. The Beginning of his Tokyo vlog he said, "Japan is all about the respect". Paul took pieces of things in Japanese stores, like color game boys, display items, etc., and he broke them and then tried to return the items claiming that they were malfunctioning. He filmed Japanese passer-bys without their permission. He took live fish from ponds and threw them at people while saying, "I'm done with these fish". He then placed them on the trunk of a cab and ran off. He was also making fun of the Japanese police officers.

The language he used, and the way he treated the Japanese disgusts me. He does a lot of what he does because that's his brand, and he has to keep up with it for the views. For example, his edgy titles that draw you in and the way he acts in his vlogs. But, he took things to a new level in a way that was inappropriate and insanely rude. That's my problem with him.

Despite all the backlash, he's still profiting. At least he's now being removed from YouTube related things, and he's taking a break from vlogging to "reflect". I still can't fathom what he did. I hope the "Logang" fans who still follow him can see what he's done and rethink their opinions about him. Hey Logan, I hope your career commits suicide and that you're exploited just like you exploited that innocent man. RIP Logan Paul, you won't be missed.

Steelers season ends in frustration, shows they weren't good enough

by Tanner Nowakowski

It is a tough time for football in Pittsburgh, as the Steelers got knocked out in their first game of the playoffs and are starting to quickly fall apart.

Everyone in Pittsburgh is in shock about the Steelers losing and not living up to their Super Bowl team expectations. In reality, they have been struggling all year. Although, their 13-3 record and winning the AFC North masks their issues all season.

The worst team in the league, Cleveland Browns, were controlling the game against the steelers forcing the Steelers to barely win in a 21-18 finish. This game should not have even been close if the Steelers were some super team. They also suffered an embarrassing overtime loss to the Chicago Bears, who only won five games.

The Steelers should not have struggled against these teams. They have one of the best receivers in the NFL in Antonio Brown and the third best defense in the league, so how could the Steelers not be winning against bottom teams in the league.

If there is anything a Pittsburgh Steelers fan knows about the team is that the Steelers struggle most against terrible teams. The teams that the Steelers struggled with are all awful teams, the Colts finished 4-12, the Bears finished 5-11. They also struggled against a broken down Green Bay Packers team with their backup quarterback, Steelers barely won 31-28.

The only game that the Steelers really deserved to win was against the New England Patriots as a last second touchdown was called back on a technicality. I guess having your hand under the ball as you cross the goalline doesnt matter

and lunging forward isn't a "football move". Even with the touchdown being called back the Steelers had 20 seconds on 4th down to make a play and score, our future Hall-of-Fame quarterback Ben Roethlisberger decides to run a fake spike play and threw it to the middle of the field in triple coverage. They were down by a field goal, why wouldn't they just kick the field goal and take the game into overtime and run an actual good, well thought out play to win the game? Anything but a rushed, broken, fake spike play to the middle where the Patriots' secondary are waiting.

This game added fuel to the fire for all Pittsburghers that hate the Patriots even more. Especially for me, as someone with a Patriots fan uncle, he made sure that i knew that Brady and his Patriots beat the Steelers again. And to make matters much worse, the Steelers waive everyone's favorite defensive end and Hall-of-Famer, James Harrison. Of course about three days later, Harrison sign with the Patriots. This signing was a low blow to Pittsburgh, the fans, and the Steelers.

This terrible ending to a rocky season ended with the Steelers finally firing their offensive coordinator, Todd Haley. Roethlisberger and Haley had issues from the moment that they were forced to work together. There is also trouble with Le'veon Bell as he might sit out next season if he doesn't get a pay raise. Bell was a huge part of our offense and is arguably the best running back in the league.

The Steelers are slowly falling apart and it is a very sad sight. Some think that Mike Tomlin is the next to go as the Steelers may start a rebuild. All that we can hope as fans is that we don't end up like the Browns.

Would Lavar Ball please go away

by Jake Newport

Lavar Ball is a father, businessman and a lightning rod for attention. He was fortunate enough to have the game of basketball shape his three sons: Lonzo, LiAngelo and LaMelo.

Basketball gave them all the opportunity to go to college for free. Not only that, but his sons could also all make a career out of the sport, but he is just throwing it all out the window.

His trademark company, Big Baller Brand, is failing and so are his children. Each member of the Ball family is at fault for this, but in the end it all leads right back to Lavar. His boisterous behavior and attention-grabbing claims have led to the crashing and burning of what could have been the sports world's next family of athletes.

Ball exemplifies what a person shouldn't do to garner success or fame. Lavar Ball is a cultural nuisance. He could quite possibly be the worst sports parent ever as well as the worst businessman ever. He would be better off out of all of our lives. Luckily for all of us, that might just happen in the near future. However, allow me to recap several of his many ridiculous comments, actions and shortcomings.

Let's start with the many feuds the Ball family patriarch has started with prominent and respected members of the sports world.

On March 13, 2017, Lavar Ball told USA Today Sports that he would, "kill Michael Jordan one-on-one."

Let that sink in. Lavar Ball, the Washington State basketball reject, seems to know that he can beat the greatest player to ever play the game of basketball.

He also seems to believe that his oldest son, Lonzo,

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It's hard to find anything good about Lavar Ball — from page 3

is better than Stephen Curry. Even though Lonzo is a talented player, Curry is a two-time NBA MVP, a two-time NBA Finals champion, and a multi-time All-Star and All-NBA player. He is a superstar in today's NBA.

Several other feuds worth mentioning that Lavar Ball has started are with Charles Barkley and LeBron James. Where does a man get the audacity to trade jabs with some of the most highly respected figures in sports?

All of his boys have had their lives go in different directions than their father intended.

Lonzo did make it to the NBA after a stellar year at UCLA which got him selected number two overall by the Los Angeles Lakers. However, he has severely underperformed both individually and in terms of the team's record, given he has been one of the worst shooters in the league and the Lakers have one of the worst records in the Western Conference.

LiAngelo probably looks the worst out of the

three as he was arrested for shoplifting in China on a trip with the UCLA basketball team. He was subsequently suspended indefinitely, only for Lavar to cap off this firestorm by pulling him out of college.

The youngest son, LaMelo, was already pulled from high school, so it only makes perfect sense that the two younger Ball brothers are signed with a pro team in Lithuania.

Thanks to some self-inflicted wounds, but mostly Lavar's ridiculous attitude, these two most likely won't be having a future in the NBA. At least they all have a \$400, "Big Baller Brand" shoe to fall back on.

Speaking of which, I almost forgot about Big Baller Brand. It is the company that Lavar Ball owns. They offer Lonzo's signature ZO2 shoe, and LaMelo's signature Melo Ball 1 as well. According to their website, the ZO2's are selling for anywhere between \$495-\$695. You can go for them or take the bargain of a price for the \$395-\$595 Melo Ball 1's.

On top of the company listing ridiculous prices

for what look like knock off Kobe's (Look up the ZO2's and a pair of Kobe's and you'll see), it is a terrible company.

Their customer service is terrible, so as to warrant them a rating from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) of an F, the lowest possible rating possible.

The report given by the BBB cited numerous occasions when products were not delivered to the purchaser. Also, people would pay for a product, only to later be told that the product was no longer in stock. This is horrible ethics from a business standpoint. From a personal standpoint, it is absolutely pathetic.

Things have completely derailed for Lavar, "Big Baller Brand", and the entire Ball family. Lonzo isn't living up to the hype, Lavar has completely ruined his other two son's careers, and he has proven that he is indeed, the worst sports parent known to date. Over the past two months Lavar has been kept pretty quiet, and I'm thoroughly enjoying it. Let's just keep it that way.

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Most Shaler Area sports teams to compete in 5A

by Jake Newport

On Friday November 17, the PIAA revealed that four schools, one of them being Shaler, would be dropping out of the 6A football section to play in 5A. The other schools leaving 6A in football are Bethel Park, Penn Hills, Peters Township. Altoona will be completely leaving the WPIAL, leaving only nine schools in the highest football section. The only reason for the shift is the decrease in the amount of male enrollment in Shaler.

"The PIAA does a reevaluation every two years to check on the size of the schools and then reassigns based on size. Our size then put us in the 5A bracket for football," Athletic Director Clint Rauscher said.

All other Shaler boys and girls sports are moving down to 5A, with the exception of both soccer teams remaining in the highest section of 4A in their respective sport. Unlike the other sports, two girls sports teams will be continuing to play in 6A. The girls basketball team and the softball team will both stay in the highest section. Meanwhile, all other Shaler boys and girls sports are moving down to 5A, with the exception of both soccer teams remaining in the highest section of 4A in their respective sport.

Recent history shows that Shaler sports have not been that great across the board. Some sports are successful, but most don't see high levels of success. Many people believe that Shaler just doesn't have the numbers to compete at 6A.

Some people look at this as a representation of

what Shaler sports are and will be: Not good enough. However, our 2010-2011 boys basketball team was 22-2 and made it to the quarterfinals of WPIAL playoffs. Just the year before that, our football team was 9-2 and also made it to WPIAL quarterfinals. There is potential for Shaler to be good again, and as unfathomable as it may seem, that potential can be realized.

Being assigned to this new section could help realize that potential, as it takes Shaler from the bottom of 6A, in terms of enrollment, to the top of 5A. Being competitive in terms of numbers is the start of establishing a competitive atmosphere, one that Rauscher and the coaches believe in and embrace.

"It is a good move for competitive balance. It will put us competing against schools with very similar size. In 6A we might face a school that has nearly 500 more kids per class. Also it may provide us with sections with very close schools, such as Hampton, North Hills, Mars, Fox Chapel. I really don't perceive any negative," Rauscher said.

"We have been just over the number that classified schools at 6A since the 6A classifications began. Although our section in 6A looked very similar to our old 4A section, the schools continued to get larger as we in fact got smaller. We will now compete against schools with more comparable numbers. This will definitely be a boost for morale, but we will continue the same focus which is emphasizing what we need to do well not what the other teams have or do," Head Varsity Football Coach James Ryan said.

Coach Ryan also believes that becoming more

competitive with these schools will lead to more players joining the football team with the given opportunity to win games.

Even though he is in support of the move, Head Boys Varsity Basketball Coach Robert Niederberger does have some critiques.

"I have mixed feelings about dropping to 5A. For as long as I remember, Shaler has always been in a section with North Hills, NA, etc. It will be weird being in a section without them. Also, we have continued to get better, so I like where we stand as we continue to compete with these guys in the future. On the other hand, when we drop to 5A, we should still be playing local teams. We should be in a section with Hampton and Mars. They are great programs so the competition will still be very solid. I would still like to get teams on the schedule like North Hills, so that the rivalry continues," Niederberger said.

Coach Brian Junker did not seem to think that being reassigned to 5A would have that much impact on his program.

"It's not going to matter much. The teams will be just as good in 5A. We won in 6A, and we will win in 5A," Junker said. "We don't focus on our opponents. We play against ourselves---each game we have the same goals if we reach these goals, we win---so it doesn't matter who we play."

Overall, the reclassification of the sports teams seems to be resonating with the coaching staffs as something positive to reestablish Shaler as a competitive school in all sports.

Unified Bocce team represents Shaler as part of Special Olympics

by Tanner Nowakowski

This year will mark the first ever Special Olympics at Shaler Area.

This new Bocce program is exactly like any other Shaler sporting event. Everyone can come to the event and support the athletes. The athletes will be competing with some guidance from student helpers. Our Shaler Titans will face school such as Moon, Mt. Lebanon, with Fox Chapel joining in 2018.

Many people are coming together to make this event possible. Ms. Samantha Smyers has worked very hard with some help from principals, faculty and even students to make the this program happen.

"There are many individuals supporting this program and bringing it to fruition. The district administrators, SAHS building principals, our athletic director, Jeff (the custodian), teachers and staff are all instrumental and very supportive of this new athletic program," Smyers said.

People in our school with disabilities that never had the chance to play sports or show off any skill of theirs, finally they have a chance in their own showcase. The participants will be challenged in many activities, the first event to be added to this program is Unified Bocce with more events to be added. The athletes that will be participating in the Olympics on the inaugural Bocce team include, Zachary Eshelman, Nakeshia McCoy, Jessica Smith, Angelina Robertson, and student helpers such as, Jimmy Bernick, Skyler Tortorea, Alyssa Interthal, and Cassie Steinmetz.

Bocce is one of the more popular events in the Special Olympics. The objective of Bocce is to get as close as you can to the Pallina and hopefully knocking other balls out of the way. The sport of Bocce, also known as Italian Lawn Bowling, is very competitive as there are currently 8 teams participating in the Bocce league and each team is made up of six to eight players.

Bernick and Eshelman are two athletes on our Bocce team and are prepared to defeat all opponents. Jimmy is excited to help Zach and all of the others in this sport as it is very rewarding to watch the effort and see the athletes grow.

"Zach Eshelman and I are partners and our objective is to outscore the other team in the round. I am very excited about how we can compete against other schools and if we win our matches we will be able to compete at Hershey for the Special Olympics Bocce championship. It's also cool to see how everyone enjoys it and knowing that they are giving it their best effort," said Bernick.

The student helpers are there to make sure that the other athletes obey the rules and play the game correctly. They are paired up to help the kids, if help is needed. This just ensures quality competition and a smooth experience for everyone.

The Special Olympics is only going to spread to more schools in the area and add more athletes to the multitude of events that the Olympics offer. Smyers expressed that her goal for the program is to publicize it and she wants many people to join in the fun.

"It is exciting Shaler Area School District is supporting Special Olympics, starting with Unified Bocce. I expect our first season to go smoothly and generate interest to engage more students to join and peer students to get involved. Several of the teams in the area have enough players for two teams! My future goal for the program would be to expand our player base," Smyers said.

This amazing athletic program is a great opportunity these student athletes to showcase their physical ability. Make sure to come out and support our student athletes on February 8 at 3pm.

SA represented in various honors bands

by Alexa Stewart

Shaler Area students placed in multiple different honors bands this year. An Honors Band is a group of individuals that consists of students from various schools around the area who audition for a spot in the ensemble. Mr. George Tepshich, band teacher, was proud of his students that placed this year.

"I am always excited to see what the students can accomplish each year. We face different challenges, but always work towards the same goal: doing our best and creating something that we can be proud of," Tepshich said.

The honors band selection process is very difficult to get into and the preparation for the audition is tedious. Many students audition but only a select few are accepted.

"This band is very prestigious and involves students from over 60 school districts. Some of the top seated players from this ensemble can receive an automatic bid into PMEA District Band, others have to send in an application. Students involved in District Band audition on the first night of the festival to potentially move on to Region I State band, and from there can audition into the PMEA All-State Band. We also have Honors Jazz Band and the Allegheny Valley Honors Band," Tepshich said.

Although not everyone that auditions is accepted, Tepshich is still proud of all of his students.

"As long as they try their best and can walk away proud of what they accomplished, that is all that I can hope for. I always expect them to represent our school with the utmost pride," Tepshich said.

Below are students who placed in various events this year.

PMEA HONORS BAND -- Michael Chaney (12) – Clarinet, Jon Brockway (12) – Euphonium, Hana LeBrew (12) – Clarinet, Michael LaBella (10) - Bassoon

PMEA DISTRICT I BAND WEST -- Jacob Aufman (12) – Percussion, Jon Brockway (12) – Baritone, Hana LeBrew (12) – Clarinet, Maryann Berdik (12) – Flute, Michael Chaney (12) – Clarinet, Michael LaBella (10) - Bassoon

PMEA DISTRICT I HONORS JAZZ BAND -- Jake Aufman (12) – Drum Set, Michael Zang (11) – Trumpet, Luke Franks (9) – Trumpet, Zachary Spondike (9) – Tenor Sax

ALLEGHENY VALLEY SENIOR HIGH HONORS BAND -- Maryann Berdik (12) – Flute, Michael LaBella (10) – Bassoon, Michael Chaney (12) – Clarinet, Hana LeBrew (12) – Clarinet, Jon Brockway (12) – Baritone, Tyler McAllister (12) – Tuba, Owen Nash (12) - String Bass

Shetty involved in helping around the world

from page 1

but you're standing there in a literal tropical paradise, the water is crystal clear and it is a tourist town, but if you turn your head this way a little you see caravans full of people who are hunched together, just trying to make it across. There is such a disconnect," Shetty said.

Currently, Shetty is working as a director for a nonprofit organization called Save The Children.

Save the Children is an international corporation operating in 120 countries whose goal is to ensure the future of every child. The corporation aims to give children a healthy start in life, an education, and protection from harm in whatever their situation is.

The organization has several different sectors including Nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, Shelter and Health Services. Shetty is stationed in London, and is the supervisor for the Health Services sector. Right now he is focusing on providing hospital and healthcare for displaced children and families due to the refugee crisis in Syria.

"What I learned early on in my deployments and travels is that people all over the world really aren't different after all. The people in Nigeria who are displaced from a conflict and the people in Nepal who are displaced from an earthquake, they still have the same needs at the root of it. That's what I try to think in some of those common times is, "what is the link



Dr. Pranav Shetty in Liberia

es, protection. We know that those are the things that people need. Our job is when we end up in a situation is 'Okay so what's missing and how do we provide that?'" Shetty said.

Shetty has developed problem solving skills and a different way of thinking because of the challenges he has faced setting up the medical clinics. Most people everywhere he went needed some kind of medical attention, and Shetty learned that if you try to fix everything at once, nothing ends up getting fixed.

"Everything is a process, you start with something small and you build up from there. You don't

that exists between these people," he said.

While building the hospitals, the key for Shetty was not to get overwhelmed and to be open minded.

"One thing is that you need to have an open mind and not have any preconceptions of what you think it will be because it's not really productive... It ends up being that humans are humans. We all have basic needs, we all have elements that need to be put in place in order to live a decent life and that doesn't change throughout humanity. We know that wherever we go, somebody needs water, somebody needs security, they need health serv-

start with your end product, you start with what is the first step and take it from there. In life any project that you do you have to map it out, it's not a jump it's kind of little steps. Otherwise everything can get overwhelming, you can't walk into everything thinking 'I have to help everyone' it's impossible. Before you treat 1000 patients you need to think, 'I need to treat this patient, who is in front of me,' and move on from there," Shetty said.

Shetty's humanitarian work has not gone unrecognized. In January of 2015, he was invited to the White House as the personal guest of First Lady Michelle Obama for the State of Union Address, and was personally thanked by President Barack Obama for all of the selfless work he's done for people around the world.

Shetty was awarded the title of Distinguished Alumnus in November at the National Honor Society Induction ceremony. While he was unable to attend the actual ceremony, his family was able to claim the award for him and his long time friend Mr. Nicholas Haberman was able to read a prepared speech that Shetty had written in response to being chosen for the award.

"I am both humbled and honored to be chosen as the 2017 Distinguished Alumnus Award winner by the Shaler Area School District Distinguished Alumnus Committee," Shetty said in his speech.

To end his award speech, Shetty gave advice to the members of National Honor Society, as well as all the students at the High School.

"My advice is ... do not ever become complacent as complacency leads to apathy and apathy leads to failure, there always has to be a next step, a future goal, something to work towards. Always. Success is relative, hard to measure, and only you will know when you have achieved it," he said.

Shaler Area off to good start in Fairchild Challenge

by Maleesa Reese

Shaler Area took first place in 2017's first Fairchild Challenge activity, a competition with all kinds of environmental challenges for high school and middle school students.

The Fairchild Challenge offers five different activities and at the end the scores are combined into an overall score. In the first activity, called "Eco Edibles", students had to create recipes without wasting any of the ingredients. Together, Shaler Area students created a ten-recipe-cookbook. The students could work together with a friend or family member.

By not wasting any parts of the ingredients, just like the students did in the Home Fries and Potato Chips recipe, a connection to climate change was established. For example, the gasoline that is used by the garbage trucks to pick up the wasted food was saved.

Not only potato peels can be saved, but also banana and lemon peels, which can be mixed to a healthy smoothie. It is not only good for the environment, but also for you. For example, banana peels have many vitamins. Most people also think that the taste is bizarre and the peels can't be eaten, but Shaler Area students proved them wrong. Every part of the fruit was used in the smoothie.

One very important point for Sophie Kachur was the climate connection, to not only save our planet, but ourselves, too.

"Conserving and eco-friendly activities are important to me because I don't want the human race to die out by something we could have prevented," she said. Together with her partner, they discovered a healthy and delicious banana peel recipe.

In the second activity, "Petals & Pollinators", junior Emily Ehrenberger took third place for Shaler Area High School, while P.J Squire got a special merit acknowledgement for the activity where the students had to create multimedia pieces.

The third activity, "Eco Lots", already started. Students have to write a one to two page description about a vacant lot in their area, compose a theoretical plan for it and how that plan would help the environment. They also have to create a visual display that shows their plan.

Last year Shaler Area won the overall competition. If a school wins the overall challenge, it is awarded money to improve its environmental programs. At the end of the year, the winners are recognized at a banquet and all participants get two free passes to Phipps Conservatory.

Policy changes hope to minimize problems

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Can you lay out the consequences for any dance offences?

If you are found with contraband, whether under the influence or not, we explain it in the contact. One policy that you guys have probably not read is school board policy No.227. It lets you know that if you are caught under the influence or with any of these items you are automatically given a 3-day suspension, followed by an informal hearing, followed by an additional suspension up to 10 days. You also get a referral to the superintendent for a preliminary expulsion hearing because if your infractions are serious enough, you could get expelled. Lastly, you are then referred to our Student Assistance Program and then the police for prosecution.

Next, is policy No.227.1 and that is for students that are involved in extracurricular activities. If you are convicted, (you will be suspended for) 10% of your season if you are an athlete in season. If you aren't in season then it applies for when your season starts.

Any changes before you enter the dance?

When you are entering the dance we are going to ask you to empty your pockets on the way in. We know that's not going to stop everything. In addition, bags are going to be set up in the lobby where you have to put your items. If you bring something, put it in the bag, we give you a ticket, you take it down and when it's time to go, you give us the ticket and we give you the bag. We are not allowing anything but phones and flip-flops downstairs. If you're worried about your phone, ask a chaperone to hold it.

Anything else that students should know?

You cannot bring any food or drink from the outside in. Pertaining to dancing, we are definitely going to be more visible on the dance floor. We are also going to have parents be chaperones, we are asking for 10 volunteers. I think we are going to get some good parents coming in and saying, "this is not that bad." So many things about Homecoming were blown out of proportion, I want parents to come and see this is not some kind of frat party.