

# The Oracle

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## Classroom dedicated to human rights issues

by Eddie Sheets

Mr. Nick Haberman has been extra busy this past year teaching students about hateful discrimination that has ended up in horrific acts of violence. Starting last year, he began a project for a new room to house the Holocaust and Multicultural Studies courses in what was formerly the GATE room.

A different room may not seem like a big deal, but to Haberman it is a step in securing a lasting monument in Shaler Area High School of student awareness on the subject of human rights and violations in the past of said rights.

There are many rooms in the building solely dedicated to the teaching of music or art, but there was never a room for teaching the subject of human rights.

This year, that changed when Haberman gained access to a new room to teach classes concerning human rights: Holocaust and Multicultural Studies courses.

"It's not that I am really doing anything different now than a couple of years ago," Haberman said, "but back then, I wasn't telling anybody about what I was doing."

Recently Haberman has won awards for his outstanding performance in the classroom.

Haberman was listed in "Who's Next Education: Meet 20 people shaping a future generation in Pittsburgh" by *The Incline* for his engagement with students and active participation with the student body of Shaler Area, but has also been recognized for his involvement with Pittsburgh's Jewish community.

He finished a fellowship with The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous this past year at Columbia University, something made possible because of his "Holocaust Educator of the Year" award given by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh.

Luckily for Haberman, these awards also led to funds, including a \$1,000 grant, and credibility to expand the program, beef up the courses he teaches, and even build a new setting for them.

He looked to the Shaler STEAM program for

possible ideas to improve his own classes.

"I wanted to create something that gets as much attention as that," Haberman said.

That led him to wonder, "What if I use the same model?...I knew that GATE was moving... and I immediately thought that's perfect."

Haberman saw an opportunity and took it.

"We need a space to display art permanently...a space where everyday people are walking past it and eventually we'll have a big sign in front of it that says 'The Light Center' or 'Center for Holocaust, Genocide, Human Rights Work'" Haberman said. "The thought is that if you get a room in the building that is dedicated to that then... it will be a constant reminder to people."

And Mr. Haberman wants a place that will stand out on its own accord.

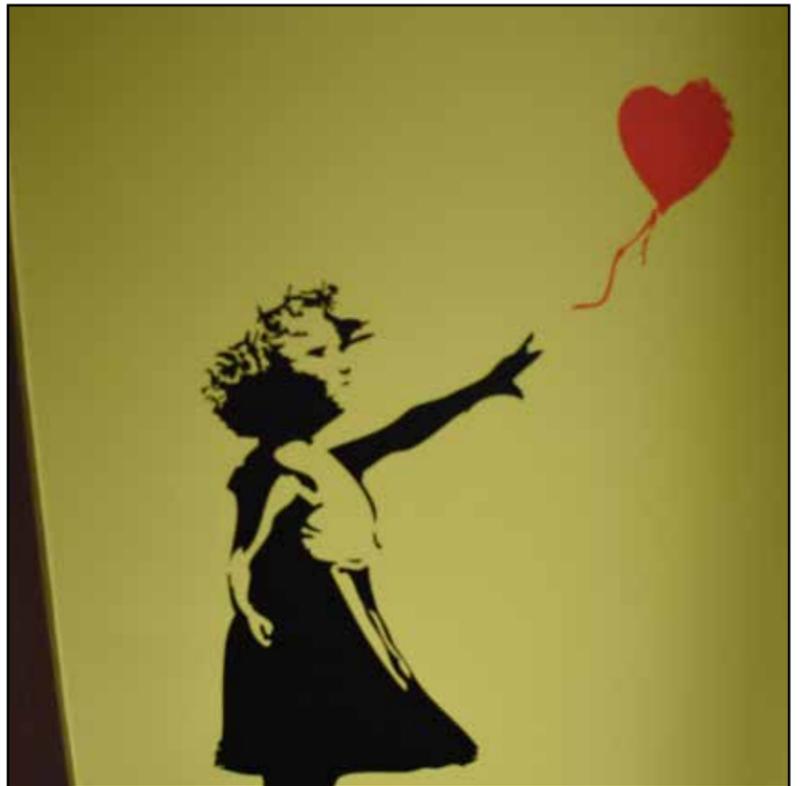
"When I'm not around...on any day people will still be reminded of it constantly."

It has been an eventful last year or so for Mr. Haberman. There was the addition of the new class to his teaching schedule, Multicultural Studies. There were the awards. And there was the new room.

But what remains most important in Haberman's agenda is not earning recognition for his own work as a teacher, but building a legacy that goes beyond himself.

"As a teacher, winning any type of award or recognition is strange, because it's the last reason anyone enters this profession," he said.

The room project was exciting for him because he feels it has potential to demonstrate that "it's affordable and it's relatively easy" to form a sanctuary in a school where students can learn about disturbing



Artwork inside the door of new human rights classroom (Aidan McKern)

historical events with the solemn respect, care, and proper approach that they deserve.

Hopefully the future will yield success concerning how such sensitive subjects are approached in public education. Haberman has used his recent recognition as the devoted teacher he is to "use the awards to create something that is bigger than me."

That is why Haberman sees so much importance in a simple room. Not just in Shaler Area, but hopefully throughout the country. Haberman hopes there will be a greater number of students aware of the tragedies of the past and willing to support solutions for the future because of their education in human rights.

He is hoping that this work will serve as a guide for other school districts to follow this lead. Haberman hopes that other schools see what is happening here and say, "Shaler is the pilot. Shaler is the model."

## School district launches Safe2Say Something program

by Brandon Kurzawski

In a modern era of technology, reporting suspicious activity is easier than ever with the many resources available to submit a report. Beginning on January 14, 2019, Shaler Area and all Pennsylvania school districts are now participating in a youth violence prevention program and anonymous reporting system run by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General.

Over the summer, an act was passed by the state legislature for school districts to opt in for an anonymous tip hotline in exchange for state funding. Safe2Say Something is a school safety tool for students, staff, and communities to anonymously report unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or the threat of activities in a school environment.

The call for a hotline came with partnership from the Sandy Hook Promise, an organization with the mis-

sion to make sure that the violence that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School never happens again in any public school.

Tip submissions are categorized based on the school district and the threat or situation. There are two specific areas to submit a tip. One area includes bullying, drugs, or non-life threatening situations where no one is in any immediate danger. The other area takes on the more serious life-threatening issues such as threats made against a school district building.

Any life-threatening tip submitted to a district is automatically going to a 9-1-1 operations as well as the crisis teams established within the school district no matter the time. Local law enforcement is also notified. Dr. Bryan O'Black, Assistant Superintendent of Shaler Area School District, praises the system with its ties to local and school officials.

"Our goal is to educate and make

sure students don't make the same decisions," O'Black said.

Though Safe2Say has many pros to defuse potential or ongoing situation, there is still the risk of people sending out threats through the hotline. Lately, school threats have been more common in the Pittsburgh region, including one threat that was made to Shaler Area earlier this year. While some may just make these threats to get out of school for the day, others are irritated by the increase of threats lately.

"The way you act to those decisions depends on if they continue to happen or cease to happen," O'Black said.

Fake tips are filtered down and reviewed in the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office. In case a student tries to test the system or just wants to pull a prank, any fake tips are reviewed and disregarded.

"If they're getting tips that say 'the clown has red hair', they're obvi-

ously not going to filter that down into Allegheny County 9-1-1 and school administration; there's a level of overview they're trying to sift through some of those fake tips," O'Black said.

In the coming weeks, the district plans to train students on the new app through assemblies to make sure students know the app exists.

"It's pretty intuitive; it's not difficult to use, but we want to make sure that people know the system is out there, how to use it, and what's the process for tips being followed upon," O'Black said.

Students are reminded that this new system isn't an emergency hotline. If you need immediate assistance and/or are reporting an event that could immediately affect the school community, please call 911 to be connected to local police departments.

Reports can be made via the Safe2say mobile app, website, or 24/7 phone line.

# OPINIONS

## Government shutdown, national emergency declaration are just more proof that our political system is ruining us

by James Engel

Looks like the President has beat another Clinton, this time Bill, who previously held the record for the longest federal government shutdown in history. He says he's proud, but now the two opposing powers are fighting once more while thousands of American lives are at stake.

I said that if we allowed the two parties to keep power they would continue to fight back and forth over nothing, and the only result would be decline and harm for the American people. These latest events just go to show it.

In the midst of all this political infighting, 380,000 American men and women have been furloughed. That's what will continue to happen if we continue to buy into this "either-or" politics, Americans will lose their jobs because well-paid, suited men in Washington are bickering over a fence that the President promised Mexico would pay for. Well, we're all still waiting on those Mexican pesos, and hundreds of thousands of Americans waited on their paychecks.

We can blame the President, we can blame Congress, we can blame whomever, but ultimately it's our own fault. We elected these people, we continually elect the same Congressmen and Senators to stay in Washington and do nothing but block the other side, and when things get too heated the government shuts down.

It seems like no opinions were changed by this shutdown. There wasn't a massive wave of Republicans suddenly snapping into reality like the Democrats hoped for in their reality. Really nothing happened except for the unpaid labor of almost four

hundred thousand of our fellow Americans.

Not enough happened, if we didn't hear the constant barrages of slander coming from each side, most wouldn't even know that the government was shutdown. Wait until more people are affected, wait until you don't get your mail, wait until you can't drive because the DMV is closed, wait until you can't leave the country because TSA can't search airplane passengers, wait until you don't get your tax returns, and wait until the government stops giving out food stamps. Then something might happen.

This shutdown may be over, but what about the next one? The two parties hate each other more than ever at this point, and another shutdown during the President's term is not unlikely. As long as the President keeps the agencies open to appease the people, nothing will happen. Because of this the President holds the "shutdown" over the Democrat's head like a trump card.

As a side point, President Trump is not the only person who can reopen the government. In fact two separate times Democrats submitted bills to reopen the government, but they were both shot down by the same man, Mitch McConnell.

McConnell is the current Senate Majority Leader, and a Republican serving from Kentucky. He has made a career out of pure opposition. He has done nothing in recent years but try to halt the Democratic agenda while failing to put forth any of his own ideas. He seemingly has one goal: make sure the other side

doesn't get anywhere. He exemplifies the divide in American politics.

He let his party of supposed "family values and small government" be led by a man who has had five children by three marriages, and is about as close to small government as vinegar is sweet, and McConnell follows him like a dog. I hope he is remembered as a failed man, and maybe in 2020 Kentuckians can halt him at six terms.

The President has now declared a federal emergency on the Southern border, so he can just put money towards a wall without the consent of Congress, a clear abuse of power and an act that sets a terrible precedent for the future. But, I don't see this changing anything.

The Democrats will fight him endlessly, while the Republicans defend his executive power and simultaneously claim to be the party of small government. Then some future Democratic president will try some similar stunt, and the Republicans will lose it, and it will be the Democrats turn to defend their man. It's all a big cycle of double think, until the people are really affected.

Until we change the way our current political system functions and we introduce more factions into the American government events like these will continue to happen. 325,000,000 people cannot be represented by 2 banners. Until we realize something has to be done and we take action, until more Americans are affected, I see no such event on the horizon.

**This shutdown may be over, but what about the next one? The two parties hate each other even more than ever at this point, and another shutdown during the President's term is not unlikely.**

## The College Board has too much control of our lives

by James Engel

I just had to register for the SATs, a step many will take in gaining college acceptance. I screwed around on the finicky College Board's website for 40 minutes trying to get it to work on mobile before I'm asked to pay \$47.50 for the test. This finally made me realize the control the College Board has over my life, and really all of our lives, as high school students.

First, let me say that the College Board is not a government funded agency. It is not affiliated with the Department of Education or any other government bureau. It is a company, and what is the purpose of companies? To make money and draw profits. Clearly the College Board is doing that because it's worth 1.12 billion dollars, and shows no signs of slowing down its efforts to monopolize higher education.

When colleges look at the very basics of a student they look at their high school transcript and their scores on standardized tests like the SAT. Let's start with the SAT, which again is *owned*. They own the test that determines your future. Hell, there's a big trademark symbol on the front to signify their hold on education. How do you send your scores to universities? Their amazingly difficult website. Seriously, you'd think the website to get you into college would be easier to use.

As an aside I'd like to talk about the Grammar section of the SAT, and why

the hell it's there. In the Math sections there are concrete answers every time. There may be multiple ways to get there, but ultimately there will always be some rational or irrational number for you to bubble in at the end.

This could not be farther from the truth for the second section of the SAT, and specifically, "Where would this sentence fit best?" type questions.

If you're asking me where it fits **best**, that means there is multiple **correct** options, and therefore it is an opinion. I might like the sentence right where it is, I think it sounds fine there, but if the man working for this billion-dollar company thinks the sentence looks nice after the fourth sentence of the paragraph then I'm screwed, and if the mystery man and I continually disagree then I've wasted my \$47.50, and I can't go to college.

On to transcripts. How does one make his transcript as delectable as possible for hungry admissions counselors? Well you stack it with AP courses, that's how. Who owns every single AP class? Drum roll please, it's the very same College Board. AP classes are not taught with the benefit of greater knowledge as their purpose, they are taught to prepare you for one test at the end of the year to determine whether taking such a rigorous class was worth it.

We are taught in preparation for one test, and only, therefore, supplied the information the College Board wants us to know. Quite literally, just the other day I heard one of my teachers say, "I'm only going to teach you the one's the College

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### The Oracle

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

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

# Teacher reflects on trip of a lifetime to Antarctica



Mr. Penn standing at the marker for the Geographic South Pole.

by Stephen Adametz

Mr. Michael Penn, a GATE teacher at the Shaler Area Elementary School recently returned from over a month long trip to Antarctica. Penn, who was selected by PolarTREC, a field research program for educators, left before Thanksgiving and was initially unsure whether he'd return for Christmas.

For his trip, Penn spent a lot of time training physically and prepared his body to experience the drastic change in conditions.

#### How long did you end up being away in total?

I was away for a total of 39 days.

#### Did you make it back for Christmas?

I spent Christmas in Antarctica, I got home on December 29.

#### What were the hardest parts of the trip?

The hardest part of the trip was that there was no day or night. Since it was daylight for 24 hours per day for the entire time I was there, time meant nothing. It was broad daylight at 3 in the morning.

Since there is such a short summer all of the science has been done in that small window, so everyone is moving 24 hours per day. If the weather was good and we could get a helicopter, we would fly at 2 or 3 in the morning. We didn't get more than about 3 hours of sleep in a row, so we were tired but your body didn't know when to be sleepy since it was always daylight.

#### What were the most exciting parts of the trip?

The entire trip was exciting and challenging but I'd have to say that the most exciting thing was being the first human to step foot at the place where we installed an automatic weather station.

#### What were the rewarding parts of the trip?

I was honored to be chosen to be part of a real scientific expedition. I was expected to be competent on the science and be able to live up to all of the intellectual and physical demands of the expedition. I made great friends and have some awesome memories!

#### How did you overcome challenges you faced?

Most of the real life and death challenges were avoided from the beginning by lots of training before we even left the United States. We were all tested on a wide range of skills to be sure we could handle almost any adversity. A lot of the training was to avoid dangers like crevasses or survival in the frozen Antarctic environment.

#### What were the interesting things you saw?

In the area of McMurdo Station, near the open water there were pressure ridges. There was amazing up thrust ice in beautiful (but dangerous) formations. In that area there were some opening in the ice that allowed huge Weddell seals (9 feet long and about 1000 pounds) to lay on the surface. Sometimes there were 10 or 20 of them laying there. They didn't care about us at all.

It was a surreal experience to fly out in a helicopter or small airplane, several hundred miles to install an automatic weather station and be left there with just one or two other people. There wasn't another human in any direction for hundreds of miles. We were really on our own.

We talked to a group of Seismologists who were installing equipment to detect earthquakes and other seismic activity...they were funded in part by the international organization that checks the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty...their equipment is also used to detect nuclear explosions anywhere on earth!

#### What were the living arrangements like?

When we were in either South Pole Station or McMurdo Station, we had pretty nice accommodations. We each had a room (with a roommate) and the building were relatively warm. We were allowed one two-minute shower per week, but that wasn't something that I looked forward to because it was cold water. When we were out on the Ice we were in one-man tents. The tents were made especially for the severe Antarctic weather. Since there was 24 hours of sunlight we could sometimes get as much as 50 degrees difference between the outside temp and the inside temp so it was pretty comfortable, but it was daylight and really windy all of the time, so sleeping was a challenge!

#### How cold was it?

Mostly around -10 with -30 wind chills, but when we were deployed to several places near the South Pole it was about -50 with -80 wind chill.

#### What was the absolute light like?

With 24 hours of daylight it was mentally and physically challenging because your body didn't know when to be tired. It was hard to sleep when it was daylight.

#### How did the elevation affect you?

Luckily the only issues I had with being at the high altitude of the South Pole was a slight headache. I did a good bit of cardio training before I left

to help to mitigate any problems my body would have with the change in pressure and lack of oxygen. I did run a 5K at the South Pole the day before Christmas called "The race around the world" (We ran around the geographic South Pole and ran through all 24 time zones). I really felt the lack of oxygen then!

#### What kind of food did you eat?

When we were "in station" the food was pretty good, although there was no fresh food at all. Everything had been frozen. So things like milk were made from powder and wasn't very good. There were no fresh vegetables or fruits so there was never a salad. Although there is a greenhouse at the South Pole Station that they grew enough greens and cherry tomatoes for Christmas dinner.

#### Would you like to do similar travels again?

I am not getting any younger. I was among the very oldest people everywhere I went and I was 20 years older than the next closest person on my team. If I have the opportunity I would seriously consider it, but at 54, I think I'm getting too old to pass the Physical Qualifications again.

#### What are some things you'll never forget?

As a teacher, this was such a great experience because my students (and students all around the world) were excited about science and geography. There is no other way that I could have gotten so many people interested in all of the things I wrote about in my journals or spoke to classes about!

#### What were the people you met like?

My team was great and I have been keeping in touch with them. The other people that were there with the United States Antarctic Program were interesting. Many of them were scientists with PhDs in all sorts of disciplines. The support personnel came from a variety of backgrounds. All of them were very qualified for their jobs, but there were a few surprises. It isn't easy to be chosen to go to Antarctica, so I met a medical doctor who was there as a "fuelie" (Fuels airplanes), a school teacher who was a custodian (So that she could accomplish her goal of going to all 7 continents) and a PhD in Microbiology working as a plumber.

#### What was the extent of wildlife you saw?

I saw dozens of Weddell seals, several birds (mostly Scua - a type of scavenger) and one solitary penguin that I saw at a distance.

#### Would you go back?

In a heartbeat!



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# College recruiters find their job both rewarding and challenging

by Stephen Adametz

During fall, many Shaler Area High School students listen to the morning announcements, eager to hear what college visits they may be able to attend that day. Students are permitted five college visits per school year, but usually freshmen and sophomores will not attend any. For juniors and seniors, sitting down with college recruiters can be a great opportunity to learn more about the school and figure out what works best for them. What many students don't know, however, is what these representatives do behind the scenes.

Caroline Williams, an admissions counselor at Miami University, explained that being an admissions counselor is almost like having four different jobs. Every season, an admission counselor's responsibility changes. Primarily in the fall, Williams will do college visits to high schools in Pennsylvania and Tennessee, the areas she recruits from.

Although she lives in Oxford, Ohio, the location of Miami University, she spends most of her fall on the road.

Not all college recruiters spend all their fall away from where they live, however. Dawn Walker, the Head of Pennsylvania recruitment for Michigan State University, lives in Pittsburgh. She will hit three of four schools she can drive to from her house, and then will take a couple trips to different places like Erie, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia.

Some counselors, however, will spend their entire fall on the road, Williams said.

Hannah Shirkey, an admissions counselor for Xavier University, said, "A lot of students have never heard of us before (unless it's from basketball) so it's a lot of fun to share all the different things we can offer."

Aside from meeting many different students, the recruiters get to see various different places. Shirkey traveled to New York City as a representative for Xavier at a Jesuit education conference.

While traveling through Pennsylvania and Tennessee, Williams has tried a different barbeque in every city she's visited. She also tries to see as many monuments in each city as possible. She stayed in Pittsburgh for about a week and visited the Andy Warhol museum, the incline, and different restaurants. While in Memphis, she went to the Civil Rights Museum, which she said was very cool.

Although Williams lives near Cincinnati, she is originally from Tennessee. Being the recruiting coordinator for the state is a nice way for her to spend some time in her home state during the fall.

Casey Powers, an admissions counselor for the University of Maine, visited Shaler in the fall as well. For Powers, it was his first time visiting Pittsburgh. Being from central Maine, it is a lot different than here in Pittsburgh. He has found it very cool to see New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"It's a new perspective of what it actually is," Powers said. He finds the area has been a lot different than portrayed. He particularly enjoyed the suburbs of Philadelphia.

"It's a new and different atmosphere," Powers said.

In the winter, many of the admissions counselors will return to campus and read resumes (while listening to Christmas music). However, Walker, who lives in Pittsburgh, gets to work from home most of the winter.

In her home office, Walker will read resumes from people in Pennsylvania applying to MSU and decide who gets admitted. One thing that is nice about living regionally is if someone from Pittsburgh ever wants to have a meeting she is close by.

She also will host events for admitted students in the Pittsburgh area where future Spartans can meet other new or already enrolled students, and people from MSU's large pool of alumni.

While Walker will continue many of these events in the spring in Pittsburgh, a lot of other recruiters spend their spring doing on campus events.

In the summer, Walker will take a trip to Michigan prior to school starting. While meeting with other recruiters, they discuss how they are going to attack recruiting in the fall.

For Williams, she said she will spend the summer doing presentations at on campus events for rising juniors and seniors. Both Walker, Shirkey and Williams also host spring and summer events that are held for admitted students.

Being a college recruiter can differ in many aspects. For Williams, she found it a great job to have as a college graduate. It is a great way to travel and see different parts of the country you many have never been to before.

Powers said that Maine has international recruiters. For those who may major or minor in a foreign language, being a college recruiter is one way to utilize that skill and see the world.

Like Williams, Shirkey enjoys working and traveling out of college.

"This is always a lot of fun – all of my territories this year I had never been to before, so I got to see some new cool cities like Pittsburgh," she said.

Living regionally, Walker won't do as much travelling. However, that is good for her as she has a family and is from the Pittsburgh region.

There isn't a specific undergraduate major for college recruiters, however. While Williams majored in opera and theater, Shirkey majored in music education. However, many schools such as Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania do offer a master's program in higher education.

Being a college recruiter has also come with some entertaining stories. Walker, who has become friends with other Pittsburgh-based college recruiters got a call the night before a college fair from a girl saying how excited she was to meet her, and that Michigan State was her number one choice. Upon arriving at the college fair, she found out from some of her colleagues that the same girl had called several other colleges saying the same thing.

Shirkey also spoke of many learning experiences she has had while college recruiting.

"I learned how important insurance is when I had an accident on my way to a night of interviews in Pittsburgh (and I'm proud to say that no one I met with that night had any idea that had happened right before I met with them)," she said.

Also, while she was in New York City for the JET conference, she had a suitcase malfunction.

My first day in NYC in the spring, my handle on my rolling travel bag (my bag with all of my brochures, table cloth, etc.) broke off and there were no backpack straps or anything to carry it around that way, so I had to tie one of my sweatshirts around the cloth handle and roll the bag all over New York City," she said.

Being a college recruiter, as many of the recruiters said, is like having four jobs in one. In the fall, they do a lot of traveling to high schools for recruiting. In the winter, they will spend time reading applications and admitting students. In the spring and summer, they will meet with admitted and prospective students and host events on campus.

## WEIRD News

\*\* Police say a Texas woman used her granddaughter's scooter to defend herself against a pair of machete-wielding men wearing clown masks who attempted to rob the woman and her husband.

Police say Aretha Cardinal and her husband, Joseph Nelson, were in the driveway of their Texas City home last week when the masked men approached and placed a machete to Nelson's throat.

Authorities say Nelson wrested away the machete from one man while Cardinal grabbed the child's scooter from the driveway and used it to strike the other man. Nelson tells Houston television station KTRK the men tried to run away but the couple chased them, smashing their vehicle window with the scooter.

The two suspects have been jailed on aggravated robbery charges.

\*\* A Pennsylvania man says his emotional support alligator helps him deal with his depression.

Sixty-five-year-old Joie Henney says his registered emotional support animal named Wally likes to snuggle and give hugs, despite being a 5-foot-long alligator. Henney says he received approval from his doctor to use Wally as his emotional support animal after not wanting to go on medication for depression.

Henney says Wally eats chicken wings and shares an indoor plastic pond with a smaller rescue alligator named Scrappy.

Henney acknowledges that Wally is still a dangerous wild animal and could probably tear his arm off, but says he's never been afraid of him.

\*\* A woman in Ventura, California, had reason to be feeling a little hot under the collar when her firefighter boyfriend proposed marriage.

That's because he faked a blaze at their house to set the scene.

It happened back in November just as the couple was preparing to host a holiday party at the home they shared.

Zach Steele, 30, thought it would be funny — unbeknownst to Maddison Ridgik, also 30 — to plant six remote-operated smoke machines in their attic before supposedly going out to pick up last-minute groceries.

He ended up going overboard with six, which caused a lot of smoke to spew out of the house, sending Ridgik into a justified panic.

However, her mom was in on the prank and faked a call to 911, which gave the signal to Steele — and a few of his firefighter buddies — to ride to the rescue in full gear.

Then Steele whipped off his oxygen mask.

"I think she saw my face and calmed down, and realized what was going to happen," he said.

\*\* Hong Kong police destroyed a German-made grenade from World War I after the device cropped up in a shipment of imported potatoes at a local potato chip factory.

The grenade, described by authorities as having been caked with mud and dirt, was discovered by workers at a factory.

Police said they used a "high-pressure water firing technique" to safely detonate the weapon.

Superintendent Wilfred Wong Ho Hon said the "the grenade was imported from France together with the other potatoes."

Dave Macri, a military historian, said that the grenade had likely been dug up by accident by potato harvesters in France.

"If it was covered in mud, the grenade was likely to have been left behind, dropped by soldiers there during the war, or left there after it was thrown" by enemies, Macri said.

# Heather Abraham: from SATV to KDKA

by Brandon Kurzawski

After graduating from high school, many students go on to pursue their careers and live out their dreams. While some will know what they would like to do career-wise throughout high school, others aren't quite as sure about their future. With KDKA-TV morning news anchor Heather Abraham, her dreams were realized later on in high school.

Abraham graduated from Shaler Area High School with the class of 2002. Her senior year was the first year of the SATV Morning Announcements show. Originally, she wasn't involved with the program, but an anchor of SATV asked Abraham if she wanted to help out with the current sports program, so Abraham agreed to help out.

"I wasn't involved in any after school activities; I wasn't writing for the paper, I wasn't involved in any sports; I was doing nothing except hanging out with my friends, so when he asked me I was like, 'yeah sure I'm not really doing anything,'" Abraham said.

SATV was where Abraham found her interest for the Television Production industry. Prior to the program, Abraham had no interest in the broadcast journalism field.

"I loved all the people that were involved in the programming, I loved hanging out with them, it was so much fun, so it just snowballed into me getting involved in TV," Abraham said.

After High School, Abraham went to West Virginia University where she got her degree in Broadcasting Journalism.

College can teach and prepare you for some of the broadcasting journalism field, but Abraham is quick to point out that college will not prepare you for every aspect of the career someone may want to go into.

"Going to college prepared me a little bit, but I don't know if you can ever really be prepared, but you don't really learn everything until you start doing any job; it's not just TV or journalism," Abraham said.

After college, she found herself working at News 12 in Brooklyn where she experienced every angle involved with broadcast journalism.

"We were taught at WVU that we were going to be one man bands; that we were going to have to do it all. Sure enough, when I got up to the station in Brooklyn, I was carrying around my own camera, tripod, getting back to the station, rushing back in traffic in New York City trying to get back to the station to make deadlines," Abraham said.

Abraham had covered many stories in Brooklyn, but there is one story she was assigned to cover that she won't forget. While assigned to cover a protest in Brooklyn, Abraham had thought the protest was on the Brooklyn Bridge. However, the protest was actually over in Manhattan.

"I went to cover this protest; I thought it was on the Brooklyn Bridge, it was not, it was on the other side of the Brooklyn bridge in Manhattan. And I had on heels, and a bag, and a tripod, and a camera, and it was August and 95 degrees and I had to lug all that stuff across the Brooklyn bridge," Abraham said.

Her job at Brooklyn allowed her to have an appreciation for the aspects of the job with intense pressure and deadlines. However, she didn't make much money in Brooklyn. Abraham decided it was time to start looking elsewhere.

Abraham missed Pittsburgh and wanted to return to her hometown, so she started to inquire about open positions available around Pittsburgh. Finally, a position opened up at KDKA where she got her foot in the door in December 2010.

Abraham started out as a morning reporter at KDKA where she had to wake up every morning at 2:45 to get into work. Once she would get her assignment, she'd proceed to the scene and try to figure out as much as possible in a short amount of time before going live on air. In between reports, Abraham figured out more details as the morning progressed.



Heather Abraham, Shaler Area class of 2002

Though Abraham has reported on many different assignments throughout her years of working at KDKA, some are more memorable than others. One day while on her way back to the station, she received a call from the assignment desk about a bank robbery in Squirrel Hill. She and her photographer had parked the news truck when suddenly a bunch of police cars went flying by.

"All of the sudden, we see all these cops come flying up and parking in the middle street so you know things are going down. They [the police] start getting out of their cars and start running, so my photographer throws his tripod, takes his camera on his shoulder. [The bank robber] was hiding right up the street. He starts running down the street; everything was happening so quick," Abraham said.

Abraham has had other opportunities to experience events happening around Pittsburgh. When "The Dark Knight Rises" was being filmed in Pittsburgh, Abraham was able to be on the set and see one of the fight scenes.

As a reporter, safety is not always promised. While covering a story in the Hill District, a situation endured which caused the police to have to set up a perimeter to detain a suspect accused of a crime. The police had thought the suspect was on the roof of a building. While Abraham could not recall the exact situation, she remembered feeling uneasy about the scenario.

"I remember thinking in that moment when you hear about all this crazy stuff on the news, I thought, 'God this guy could be up on the roof somewhere and just start shooting,' you really have no idea what could happen in any situation; there is no force field around us, things can happen," Abraham said.

Being part of the KDKA-TV means Abraham is a part of the Pittsburgh community. As a public figure, others will pay attention to what she is doing regardless of what it is. Going anywhere, her personal life and work life are always blended.

"People watch me every morning, so they feel like they know me. It's rewarding in so many ways, but you never expect it. I'm just doing my job every

morning and I love my job, but when you get stopped, you think, 'Wow, people are really watching!' which really is neat to think about," Abraham said.

Abraham has recently become the morning news anchor of KDKA-TV morning news. In her experience with reporting, she's been nominated for several Emmy's, one for looking deeper into the work of the Pittsburgh Police Vice Squad. She also won a Golden Quill award for her reporting on a 7-alarm fire in Homestead.

Abraham also does a 9 a.m. community show called 'Pittsburgh Today Live.' In the show, she gets to interview local figures doing different events and fundraisers as well as discuss other things happening in Western Pennsylvania.

Since Abraham has started her career, the business of journalism has evolved with the rise of technology and social media outlets like Facebook or Twitter. Some may see this as a negative thing, but Abraham reminds others to look at things more in a positive way.

"If you resist change, then it's going to be a negative thing for you, but if you say, 'Okay, there's no way to avoid this, how can we do it in the best way possible,' then it's a good thing," Abraham said.

Though, it's become harder for people to believe everything they see in the news. With the recent outbreak of 'Fake News,' it often does get frustrating for journalists. In the modern day era, anyone could create a website and say whatever they believe, but it does get frustrating when trying to report on an actual story which makes things to be more difficult.

"To me, it's always really frustrating and you have to bite your tongue a lot. There's no winning when some people just believe that it's all fake; it's frustrating because you know what you're doing. You know what you're putting out there," Abraham said.

Even with the spread of fake news, whether people believe her or not, Abraham still enjoys what she does every day.

"The thrill of this job is that every single day it's something different; there's something new happening," Abraham said.

# Survivor of Holocaust, Tree of Life shooting shares stories

by Julia Falgione

Judah Samet is an amazingly brave man who not only survived as a Jew living in Hungary during World War II, but also survived the most catastrophic anti-Semitic tragedy in American history, the Tree of Life synagogue shooting last October.

Samet was a special guest of Mr. Nick Haberman and his Holocaust class where he shared his stories from both World War II and his involvement at the Tree of Life Synagogue.

In 1944, Hungarian Jews including the Samet family were detained by Germans and sent to camps. The Samets originally were put on a train bound for Auschwitz, but were ended up in a camp in northern Germany.

Samet, spent less than a year at Bergen-Belsen, which started out as a prisoner-of-war camp and became a concentration camp for civilians. He was moved by train to Berlin where he was freed by American troops.

More than 60 years later, he was literally caught in the crossfire again.

On the day of the Tree of Life shooting, Judah happened to arrive later than usual to the synagogue.

“Usually I would be there at 9:45, but my housekeeper had held me up for a few moments,” Judah explained.

When he got to the synagogue he was looking for a parking spot, which is fairly close to the synagogue because he has a handicap parking pass, but a man came up to him and told him it was not safe.

“In a very gentle way, he told me I better move out, there is a shooting in the synagogue.”

The man vanished and Judah could not find him.

“Nobody knew him. No one had ever heard of him,” he said.

Soon after, a police detective came close to Samet’s car. He had a pistol drawn and was shooting at something near the synagogue.

At that time Samet had little idea of what was going on. Samet needed to see who was shooting at the officer, because that is what he was trained to do when he was a paratrooper for the Israelis.

“The first thing they teach you is when you hear bullets before you do anything, find out where they come from,” he said.

Out of the courage and experience Judah had, he slowly peaked his head over to the passenger side of his car to have clear visibility of the shooter.

“There were only four cars between us. I noticed his shooting (gun) was much quicker than the officers pistol,” Samet said.

Judah was the only one on the scene able to give an exact description of the shooter.



Judah Samet (right) talks with CNN's Anderson Cooper after the Tree of Life shooting in Squirrel Hill.

“Everyone, even the police, could not remember anything. They were so traumatized they had a hard time recalling,” he said.

Multiple people made vague descriptions of the man, but Judah corrected the ones that were wrong.

“Some people said he was heavy and i said no he was normal. Some said he was short, i said no he was close to six feet tall,” Samet said.

While the man was shooting, his bullets were very close to Judah’s car but luckily he was not touched.

“I was so surprised not one bullet hit my car”

Samet tried to get out of the parking lot but couldn’t because many others were also trying as well. When he finally got home, his housekeeper was crying and jumped on top of him in relief. He had forgotten his phone at home, so when his housekeeper called there was no answer.

After the word got out of Judah’s whereabouts during the shooting, a large amount of national news stations called him for interviews.

“It was so different. They set up studios in my apartment. Anderson Cooper was the first person to interview me near the synagogue.”

Judah described the synagogue after the shooting like a tombstone, empty.

“It took them several days to remove the eleven bodies, which was really hard on me. That was a synagogue I was at for over fifty years,” he said.



Judah Samet poses in front of his own photo/story at the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh

Judah was also invited to the White House, but did mention that “politics should not in anyway matter in this situation.” When at the white house he brought his family as well and they provided everything for him like transportation and housing for his time there.

“When you see a king, a prime minister, or a president for the first time, there is a blessing you have to do. They are appointed by god. He put them in the right pace at the right time, so i will find a way to do that blessing.”

There was another synagogue in Squirrel Hill kind enough to let the members of the Tree of Life synagogue to worship there.

In the aftermath, Samet was impressed that a crime of hate could bring about so much unity.

“There is a lot of money being raised from all over the world. If this tragedy did anything, it united the world in a way it hadn’t been united before.”

## Hunting for Hoops teams

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**SUNS**

**THUNDER**  
**TIMBERWOLVES**  
**TRAILBLAZERS**  
**WARRIORS**  
**WIZARDS**

# School responds to local tragedy with project to promote hope, healing, peace

by Brandon Kurzawski

On October 27, 2018, the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill was the scene of a mass shooting that killed 11 people and injured many others. In honor of the victims, people from around the world came together to show their support in various ways. Even in the Shaler Area community, students wanted to show their support for the Synagogue.

At Shaler Area High School, students from the Japanese National Honors Society (JNHS) came together and made 1,000 paper cranes to show their support.

The idea came from the Japan America Society of Pennsylvania (JASP), an organization in Pittsburgh that is dedicated to promoting the understanding of Japanese culture. In response to the tragedy, the JASP came up with the idea of making 1,000 cranes to express their condolences.

A famous story surrounding the cranes for peace belief dates back to the famous story of Sadako Sasaki. Sasaki was a little girl who was exposed to radiation as an infant when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Though she survived the bombing, she was diagnosed with leukemia by the age of 12. She decided to fold 1000 cranes, hoping that her wish to live would come true. Unfortunately, she was only able to fold 644 cranes before she passed away.

Her classmates then continued to fold cranes in her honour and she was buried with a wreath of 1000 cranes to honor her dream. A statue of Sadako in Hiroshima Peace Park resembling a little girl standing with her hand outstretched holding a paper crane.



Kylie Dougherty, Japanese teacher Mr. Steve Balsomico and Natalie Perrine display the 1,000 paper cranes. (TribLive.com)

The cranes themselves are a legend in Japanese culture that are said to make one's wish come true if they are folded. It has also become a symbol of hope and healing during challenging times. However, a stronger message is conveyed through the cranes: a wish for peace.

Japanese teacher and leader of the JNHS Mr. Steve Balsomico decided to match their goal of 1,000 cranes after being inspired by their efforts. Balsomico had already planned to send a crane project to Hiroshima over the summer, but in wake of the Tree of Life Synagogue tragedy, students and Balsomico wanted to do something to show their support.

"It really moved me; I just wanted to join with it, but also fulfill a project from Shaler, so we decided to match their thousand cranes," Balsomico said.

Help from the JNHS and other students and staff members helped reach their goal of 1,000 cranes in just 7 days.



## College Board from page 2

Board wants you to know."

This is not a knock against the teacher in question as they make their subject very interesting and it is one of my favorite classes, but it just goes to show our acceptance of the status quo. I'm sure many of our teachers could write much better curriculum than what is provided to them by the Board, but they have to prepare us for our \$94 test, and, therefore, are heavily restricted on what they can teach us and allow us to know.

As another aside, the writing that the College Board teaches is completely useless. The essay questions of AP history tests are just checklists you have to follow in 42 minutes. The prompts are always the same: "Evaluate the extent to which x affected y." You look at the list of stuff and eventually write your thesis statement that is always, "Although x, ultimately y, because a,b,c."

There are literally formulas for writing. Should we expect any of it to be halfway decent? No. It's all garbage you write because the College Board wants you to, and you'll go on in life without knowing American history because a company made you memorize how to write terribly, instead of memorizing the words of some great American President.

The College Board takes the job of teaching away from our educators, and it uses its power to bring in millions while we struggle to conform to their standards. The concept of corporations in education should be disgusting, but as of now there seems to be no resistance. Think about that the next time you turn over a copyrighted test page.

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