

# The Oracle

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## Congressman Lamb visits Shaler Area



by Frank Babicka

**Congressman Conor Lamb visited Shaler Area High School on February 17, 2022. In a town hall event organized by Mr. Jason Pirring, who teaches Civics and Government, Congressman Lamb took time to speak with Shaler Area students in 11th grade Civics and Government classes. Congressman Lamb first won election to Congress in 2018 and he is currently running for the United States Senate.**

**Before the Congressman arrived, the Civics and Government classes researched his stances on issues and what bills he supported and opposed.**

**"I was really pleased with the event and the questions the students asked. Having this opportunity for students is incredible to be able to ask questions to a Congressman and to have that kind of interaction with him. A lot of people never get the chance to meet their Congressman so for me this is a big deal," Mr. Pirring said.**

**While there were some odd questions, such as when the Congressman was asked about his Hogwarts house and his favorite Taylor Swift Song, most of the questions were focused on the Congressman and his role in government. "Overall I heard good things about him coming in. Even if students don't agree with his political views they had the chance to meet and ask the Congressman questions and his stance on issues," Mr. Pirring said.**



## "Hamilton" company manager shares stories of his shows, success

by Hannah Stelitano

Brad Broman has grown up with the performing arts in his life. From a young age, he has always been dancing and/or singing on stage. Now, he is the company manager for the largest and most well-known musical tour in the world, "Hamilton".

"I always wanted to be a performer but I wouldn't have ever guessed that company management would be something that I'd end up in," Broman said.

"As a child and throughout high school, I was extremely busy. I wanted to fill my time doing what I love," Broman says.

Growing up, Broman did not come from a lot of money. His parents were not able to help him much in the theater world, in terms of auditions, but regardless of their financial situation, they were extremely supportive. In order to pay the fees of auditions, Broman worked throughout his childhood to fulfill his dreams.

"I always took vocal lessons when I was younger. I was also always involved in a show. I never took technical classes, but was always cast in different shows."

While attending Penn-Trafford High School, Broman participated in all four of the musicals and three of the school plays. During these shows, he was also actively participating in more shows through the Apple Hill Playhouse, Greensburg Civic Theatre, and the Pittsburgh Musical Theater.

"I was in countless shows growing up but I would have to say that my favorite one was 'Grease'. I was constantly in a production of 'Grease' and ironically I played Doody every time. Once one production would end another director would call me and ask me to be in theirs," Broman said.

While he has had plenty of experience with the character of Doody in "Grease", it was not his favorite role.

"I would have to say that my favorite role I have played in shows growing up was Ryan in 'High School Musical'. I was in a production of this show through Pittsburgh Musical Theater and collaborated with Emily Lynn Miller, one of my mentors to this day."

After graduating high school, Broman attended New York University. Going into college, he had no idea what he wanted to do. As he moved to New York City by himself, he barely knew anything. He had only been there a handful of times before for auditions and was completely unfamiliar with not only the area, but also the lifestyle.

At the time, NYU was divided into 7 different programs, each focusing on a different type of theater. For the first two years of his studies, Broman entered

Cont. on page 11

## Shaler Area Polar Plungers raise more than \$5,000

by Alyssa Hillwig

On Friday, February 25, a team of volunteers from Shaler Area High School took turns leaping into a cold pool of water outside of Heinz Field as part of a fundraiser event, the annual "Cool Schools" Polar Plunge.

The Polar Plunge helps support almost 16,000 athletes in Pennsylvania, as proceeds go to the Special Olympics as well as several unified programs within the state, like Shaler's Unified Bocce Team. While the primary goal of the event is to raise funds, it also provides a great way of raising awareness of Special Olympics altogether.

"School-wide awareness and communication regarding our Special Olympic athletes and the push for inclusion is important," Shaler Area life skills teacher Mrs. Christin Pintar said.

Last year, Shaler hosted its own version of the Polar Plunge at Kiwanis Park in support of our school's Backpack Initiative.

"We considered our first Polar Plunge to be successful," Pintar said. "Dr. Aiken, Dr. O'Black, Officer

Spiker, Officer Jackson, Mr. Rauscher, and various teachers also attended Shaler's first Polar Plunge."

Many participants enjoyed the event, as it proved itself to be a fun way for students, staff members, and community members alike to contribute to a cause that has great impact on many lives

"It was a neat experience," senior Aidan Brophy said. "A lot of people were involved, both people jumping in and people making sure it was safe to jump. There were space heaters on the pool deck and hot drinks were included with admission, so there were a lot of ways to warm up after you took the plunge."

With the success of last year's makeshift event, the excitement for this year's Polar Plunge at Heinz Field was palpable and the registration was widespread as students and staff waited to plunge once again to support such an important cause.

"It was so cold that when I jumped in it felt like I got the wind knocked out of me, but I'm happy I did it since it was for such a good cause and it was definitely an experience I'll never forget," senior Kiera Harger said.

Our team, the TITAN-ics, last had just over 30 students participating. This year, though, that number has almost tripled, making Shaler Area's team the largest out of all the 128 schools that registered.

"This time, thanks in part to the amazing video created by former SATV students, we have over 80 students who will be "freezin' for a reason"," Pintar said. "Dr. Aiken, Dr. O'Black, and Mr. Rauscher continue to support this worthy cause for our school and will be plunging along with other teachers from the high school."

This additional engagement in the event has also proved to be extremely beneficial for the causes that it was made to support, as this spike in participation has helped Shaler to go beyond its donation goal. Over \$5000 has been raised, making this event a huge success, as the money will continue to benefit members within our own community and all over the state. Mrs. Pintar can't thank the participants enough.

"This year, we surpassed our fundraising goal of \$3000," Pintar said. "We are grateful for the support of our administration, the students, and their families."

# OPINIONS

## Cultural differences in movies should be celebrated

by Alyssa Hillwig

Disney's "Encanto" received favorable reviews upon its release in late 2021; a story that explores the complexities of family relationships, generational differences, and the meaning of love, many also found it to be a charming display of self-expression, discovery, and acceptance.

Most importantly, the movie utilizes an alluring setting and provides an enriching cultural perspective that had only been briefly explored previously in "Coco".

The film centers around the Madrigals, a Colombian family with extraordinary abilities granted to them through the magic stored in the Encanto—a magical gift created to supplement a sense of stability for a desperate widow and her newborn triplets.

The protagonist, Mirabel, is the only member of said family who has not been blessed with her own gift by the Encanto, but is the only one blessed with the skill to protect her family from the dangers of their crumbling magic; she ultimately finds her purpose not in some magically enhanced talent, but in becoming the force that draws her family together.

The plot line itself is simple, yet endearing enough to attract a variety of audiences, and it's in this fact that we find our most prominent issue with the general reception of this film in the media: the traditions and heritage associated with the Latinx community that are represented in this film are being impeded on, and practically colonized, by viewers who should know better, but don't.

Shortly after the film's release, I remember reading a comment on social media that claimed that the movie's "cultural barrier" took away from this viewer's experience when watching the movie. I found myself completely dumbfounded—I couldn't even begin to understand the idea that anybody could find this as an inconvenience or a limitation.

As a person of color who has little prior experience with Colombian communities, I was fascinated by the incorporation of elements of a culture I wasn't



familiar with. The inclusion of classic Colombian embroidery and weaving techniques, dazzling bright colors, traditional salsa and bachata, and the diversity of skin tones and hair types added a meaning to the film that felt incredibly impactful, even though it went beyond my scope of understanding.

Even if it wasn't written to represent my culture, I felt excited that an underrepresented group finally had its breakthrough in mainstream media.

While it is my film to enjoy, and it is your film to enjoy, it may not always be our film to truly understand. Everybody is allowed to have their own individual feelings and critiques towards any story they consume based on a variety of factors (plot line, screenwriting, character development, set design, musical and lyrical quality, etc.), but this can't allow us to strip the movie of its deepest and most important connection to real-life society.

We must begin to see the problem with people taking it upon themselves to evaluate aspects of a culture that is not theirs, and to leave the assessment of the accuracy of representation to the group that it

actually represents.

This has remained a consistent, prolonged issue for decades with all different marginalized groups; with so many cookie-cutter stories with the same cookie-cutter princess and cookie-cutter fairy tale ending, it's rare that minority communities have the opportunity to embrace a story that reflects the traditions and values that they have been surrounded by their entire lives. We must let them seize this opportunity instead of burying the cultural differences behind a formulaic Disney message.

We must learn to enjoy films like "Encanto" by appreciating cultures that we do not associate with while maintaining a respectful distance from any judgements that are not ours to make; we will not be able to truly honor these cultures as a society until we allow cultural representation to feel less like a barrier and more like basic representation of the different aspects of our combined society. We shouldn't have to wait for a miracle—we need to learn something from Mirabel and her journey by continuing to push towards ideals of love and unity.

## School should allow students "mental health" days

by Julia Barbati

We can all agree that sometimes we need a break, mentally. With busy lives of work and school, along with the stress of world affairs, life can become overwhelming. With that being said, schools should impose mental health days for students.

Students are pressured everyday to succeed and build a stable foundation for their future. If this foundation is not built correctly, it will negatively affect the rest of the students' lives and because of this, anxieties fill our minds.

Most of the time, assignments and studying take over nights, leaving a horrific sleep schedule and an endless cycle of fatigue. This cycle then leads to difficulty concentrating and not being able to function at full capability during the school day.

Not only is stress an outcome from school, but also from daily life. In high school, students start applying for jobs to pay for gas, insurance, recreational activities, etc. For some, there is a specific amount of money that needs to be replenished in order to be able to pay for these things. Therefore, a specific amount of hours needs to be worked weekly. Soon, free time is rare and there is no longer an equal

split between work and a personal life. Combined with school work, it can be overwhelming.

Due to COVID-19, anxiety has become more common among students. Going back to school being almost completely normal was a big change that took time to get used to. With online school, it was easier to create a well-planned time management schedule, since most sports were canceled, and teachers were more lenient with assignments and tests.

Once students were able to go back to school on a daily basis, many came to the realization they were behind, which creates even more pressure for students as well as staff to catch up on what was missed in the last few years.

Now that there is an idea of the stress factors high school students experience daily, it is reasonable to need a mental health day every once and a while. Schools should allow students to take at least one mental health day per month. This can be any day during the month chosen by the student and would be an excused absence. If needed, parents can approve the mental health day and all teachers will be notified of the reason for absence.

Many benefits can come from taking a day to regenerate from daily life

such as catching up on sleep, focusing on yourself, and being able to heal your mind. This creates a way for students to pause and focus on themselves to come back with a better mindset as well as the possibility of decreasing mental illness.

A recent study revealed that one in five teens between ages twelve and eighteen suffer from a mental illness. Schools are too blind to see that a large number of students are drained and mentally exhausted. A day off can truly make a difference.

An article on American education states that the biggest issue in the education system is "lack of motivation". A big flashing sign is not needed to say

that the lack of motivation comes directly from stress and being constantly overwhelmed. Did anyone ever think that students would be more motivated if we were not constantly being put to the test of our mental capacity? A mental health day brings the possibility of rejuvenating this "lost" motivation that is seen in many students.

Mental health needs to be taken seriously, especially when dealing with the future of the world. Mental health days should be imposed in schools to help students take a break from their daily stress and anxiety. Since students do not have a choice to go to school, our needs should be prioritized and important to schools.

### The Oracle

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

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

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

# OPINIONS

## SAT changes are a step in the right direction

by Savannah Schultis

If you're a high school student, I can almost guarantee that you've thought about the SAT before. Whether this exam causes feelings of anxiety, or you couldn't care less, every high school student has to decide whether or not they want to take it. Perhaps more students will be willing to take the exam as the College Board has recently decided that the paper and pencil SAT will become digital for U.S. students in March of 2024, making the class of 2025 the first to take this digital format.

The digital version will still include the same structure and content, be graded on a 1600-point scale, and will be taken in school or at a testing center. The differences include the length of the exam (from three hours to two hours), shorter reading passages, and less wordy math questions. In addition, calculators will be allowed for the entirety of the math section and scores will be sent in days instead of weeks.

I took the SAT in the spring of 2021 during my junior year. Although I had previously taken the PSAT and had some sort of expectation, I was still very stressed out about the SAT. I felt as though I would run out of time, not compre-



hend reading passages, or get stumped on math problems.

Just from the information that the College Board has provided about the digital exam, it sounds significantly less difficult and stressful. According to Priscilla Rodriguez, the Vice President of the College Readiness Assessments at College Board, the digital SAT will be a "better, more flexible test that's easier to take, easier to give, more secure, and more relevant."

I think it's great that the College Board is creating an exam that is more relevant and easier to take. I believe that the SAT does not always reflect the academic character of a student, as some students have test anxiety. A three-hour exam should not overshadow a four-year high school transcript that an individual has built. This also corresponds with the decision of many colleges which have decided to make taking the SAT optional for admission. The College Board is following their lead and plac-

ing less emphasis on the exam.

I support the College Board's decision in making the SAT easier and more relevant and I hope it alleviates stress surrounding the exam. With all things considered, a digital SAT is definitely a step in the right direction.

## LaBrants more worried about followers than their kids

by Hannah Stelitano

The LaBrant fam, a YouTube sensation, gained popularity through a series of videos they posted on their multi-million subscriber YouTube platform. Although all of the content they post on their channel appears to be perfect, this is certainly not the case. Through a series of messy breakups, exposed lies, and neglecting their children, the LaBrants are overhyped and selfish, paying more attention to their followers than their own children.

Cole (25) and Savannah (28) have one thing in common, they love being in the spotlight. Cole, the biological dad to Posie and Zealand, started his career on Vine. He and a few friends would post funny videos and soon gained fame. They quickly became popular and decided to move to LA to help grow their channel.

It soon became apparent that Cole was the only one who truly wanted to be in the spotlight. His friends had lost their passion for making videos but Cole wanted to continue. After his friends left him, Cole reached out to Savannah, who at the time was somewhat on a similar path.

She was dating Tom Smith but was going through an extremely messy series of breakups. Savannah and Tom are the biological parents of Everleigh. It was a never-ending on again, off again relationship. Tom promised Savannah that he would stay with her and Everleigh and be a good father. Sure enough, Tom left Savannah again, but this time, for good. Savannah began making lifestyle videos of her raising her daughter which became popular throughout the world.

Cole decided to reach out to Savannah, hoping that her platform could help his platform grow. Soon the two met, and from there, they continued the rest of their lives together. The two got married and had two kids together, Posie and Zealand, and are now expecting a third.

They put their lives on display through seemingly every social media platform possible, but this should not be how their young children are raised. Cole and Savannah post daily vlogs of every moment



in their life. This should not be what their children grow up like. It is not fair that the whole world knows every single moment of these young children's lives.

When their son Zealand was born, he had to stay in the NICU for multiple days due to health concerns. Instead of taking this time to be with their newborn son who was sick, the couple was still vlogging and posting content to their channel.

Everleigh is a competitive dancer, and every single moment of her dance career is posted on her social media platform, which is run by her parents. Every rehearsal, competition, or private lesson is posted on Instagram just so the family can gain more popularity. Is it actually Everleigh who wants to be posting this or is it her parents? Does Everleigh actually want to be dancing or are her parents forcing her to so that their channel can gain more views?

Posie is only two years old and constantly having photo shoots. It is completely unnecessary for a two-year old to have an numerous amount of photo shoots, just to keep her family name popular. Again, does Posie actually enjoy this or is it just for more fame for the family's name?

Not only are they overexposing their children to

the world, they are lying and misrepresenting their lives not only to the world, but to their kids as well.

A series of exposed lies now hangs over the family's heads. In one video, Cole and Savannah pranked Everleigh by saying they had to give up their family's dog. Everleigh was obviously distraught at this news, not knowing it was a lie. Fans quickly jumped on the couple for this disturbing behavior.

The family also filmed an episode on cancer. They titled the film "She got Diagnosed with Cancer." The film was about their youngest daughter, Posie, and the thought of her having cancer. They took her to get a cancer scan, but it turned out that she was not diagnosed with cancer.

Although the family claims that they were 'trying to raise awareness for this disease', they used it to gain popularity by choosing a title that would make fans click on the video, giving them more views, and yet again, more popularity.

I think it's safe to say that they need to spend more time with their family and less time on YouTube. Social Media is ruining the lives of their kids and exposing them for who Cole and Savannah really are more and more each day.

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# Famous horror movie special effects artist creates program to share his story and secrets

by Sarah Naccarato

“From Dusk Til Dawn”, “Friday the 13th”, “Creepshow”, and “The Burning” are all movies that the famous special effects makeup artist Tom Savini has contributed to. Savini is not only an artist but also a director, actor, stuntman, and mentor.

In 2000, Savini took on the responsibility to open and teach a 16-month program made specifically for those interested in pursuing special effects makeup as a career. His decision to open his school was rooted in the fact that he felt cut off from the art side of the horror world.

Being born in 1946, he wasn't necessarily born into the peak of the horror movie genre. Savini wasn't exposed to a lot of special effects growing up, until one movie seemed to strike a chord.

“When I was eleven I saw a movie called ‘A Man of a Thousand Faces’. Before that movie I thought all the stuff was real. I thought Frankenstein was real, I thought the Wolf-Man was real, but that movie showed me that somebody creates the monsters, so I decided I was going to be one of the guys that creates the monsters,” Savini said.

Before his career blossomed in the 1980s, Savini described how very few people were interested in special effects makeup, and those who were working in the field remained very secretive about their knowledge. This career path was exclusive and particular, having almost no opening to learn and no resources to take advantage of other than watching horror movies. This changed when Savini was introduced to Dick Smith, the special effects makeup artist behind *The Exorcist*, *The Godfather*, and other films.

“Dick Smith was the greatest living makeup artist on the planet. He invented everything we do. But he shared his secrets... So it's because of him that I learned a lot, and that's why my school exists,” Savini said.

Savini has openly admitted to once possessing some of the qualities he despised seeing in other artists. As he became more experienced and well-known in the horror world, the more he began to look down on those who were starting out newly, as he once



A display of an array of works from Tom Savini in his garage.

was. These dangers are the same ones in which many of the early artists he spoke of fell into. Despite this, Savini was able to recognize his faults and change how he treated such people.

“I was kind of arrogant thirty years ago doing conventions, thinking, ‘What am I doing here? These are all has-beens.’ But they're not, that was my arrogance.”

It wasn't until one specific encounter that Savini came to the realization that you never know who someone will become. While it may not have seemed like a monumental interaction at the time, one conversation led Savini into more films, including “From Dusk Til Dawn”, which have become highly appraised over the years.

“I was at a convention once and this kid came up to me and said, ‘Hey, I work at this video store. I was wondering if you would mind coming by and looking at the videos and signing some of your stuff.’ I said sure, and I went. It was Quentin Tarantino! A kid working in a video store. He's hired me five times since then. So, you never know who's going to be-

come what, so I'm nice to everybody.”

Besides other artists, actors and filmmakers have inspired Savini throughout his career. It was through comradery that Savini was able to learn special tricks and secrets behind the makeup world. Being born in a time when there were little to no artists of this kind, it was a drastic change to see the difference in numbers within the career field, and one that has been inspiring for many.

“So many people want to be a special makeup effects artist, and that makes me feel good. When I was growing up, there were six of us. And now there's hundreds,” Savini said.

The special effects makeup program, located in Monessen, PA, gives students the inside scoop on various skills within the special effects field. Savini provides detail regarding his career and time as an artist, teaching from his own experiences. His school is still open today, inviting and teaching students all over the world. Savini's work has come to shape the world of special effects makeup, and his lasting impact continues to influence horror movies to this day.

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## \$4,207 raised for Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

by Andrew Deal

Shaler Area High School set a new record earlier this month by raising \$4,207 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. With the help of the National Honors Society organizing the Pennies for Patients competition amongst 1st period classes, the new record was set. The money raised is going directly to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

According to its website, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is “dedicated to curing leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and other blood cancers” and is “the world's largest voluntary (nonprofit) health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research and providing education and patient services.”

The society itself was started in 1949 by a family who had just lost their teenage son to leukemia, which at the time was 100% fatal. This number has since dropped at least 30% since the society was invented.

After a down year in donations last year because of COVID, the students made up for it this year by almost doubling the previous record for money raised.

The students had a little more motivation to donate money as the top three classes that raised the most money in each of the two class size categories won a breakfast. They received a free first period pancake breakfast for their victories.

“This is so important because all of the money goes directly to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, which helps with Childhood Leukemia that accounts for 25% of all cancers in children,” National Honor Society sponsor Ms. Abbey Nilson said.

# Flight 93 Memorial a place for reflection, education

by Ella Katona

Just over 20 years ago, there was an event that took place that changed the world. The September 11, 2001 attacks, more commonly referred to as 9/11, were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamist Terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States.

Some, when they hear this date, can immediately recall every hour they spent that day. While younger generations were not even born yet and are just starting to grasp the reality, seriousness, and grief it caused the nation.

The lives that were tragically lost during these attacks should not be left in vain and should be carried on to educate future generations and relayed as a significant part of our history, no matter what month of the year it is.

Though the first attacks happened in New York, there was another location in the small town of Shanksville, PA where Flight 93, one of the four hijacked planes, crashed.

This flight was significant because it contained 40 heroic passengers and crew who prevented a terrorist attack on our nation's capital by fighting back against the hijackers, which resulted in them crashing into a field.

The staff of The Oracle was honored when we heard we would be visiting the Flight 93 National Memorial and to have the opportunity to interview one of the Memorial's Park Rangers.

We had passed the Tower of Voices monument near the entrance of the memorial and peered in awe at the 93-foot-tall musical instrument and its 40 windchimes that trailed down the structure to represent the forty passengers and crew members.

Ranger Gregory Zaborowski speaks at the Flight 93 Memorial

When we got to the Visitors Center main entrance, it was almost completely silent. You could hear the footsteps on the concrete and the crunching of grass from other visitors behind you and the slight "whoosh" of the wind on the hilly landscape.

We followed the concrete pathway at the begin-

ning of the memorial that represents the flight path the plane took before it crashed.

The memorial keeps the entire crash site preserved, surrounding it by a gated fence that they only open once every year, September 11th. A big boulder marks the point of impact and the only people allowed to enter are the loved ones and family of the passengers and crew members. Though it is a simple field with a boulder and some fencing, no words can express the emotions and images when staring at the site.

The memorial also has a building that acts as a museum to represent all of the events around Flight 93 on that day. Raw materials and objects from the crash are safely kept in glass casings. There were ID's, pieces of metal from the plane, gifts left at the memorial from loved ones, tickets from passengers on the flight, and articles of clothing.

It became even more surreal watching nearly a dozen news feed clips of the attacks on the World Trade Center that the museum presented from various news stations and we were able to pick up a fake telephone to listen to voicemail messages that passengers and crew members left for their friends and family.

One of the park rangers in charge of education at the Memorial, Gregory Zaborowski, he told us dozens of stories about his experiences working there and how it feels like "fate" every time he meets people who have such a unique and momentous connection to the Flight's Memorial.

He told stories about how he pushed a family member who was related to a passenger from Flight 93 in a wheelchair across the entire hilly field of the memorial, just so she could see, experience, and feel



Tower of Voices at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, PA.

more connected to it up close.

While listening to his stories, another group passed by who were the hometown friends of FBI officer Lillie Leonardi, who wrote the book "In the Shadow of a Badge: A Spiritual Memoir" about seeing angels on the field where the hijacked airliner crashed.

"These are not just coincidences," Zaborowski said. "Everything happens for a reason."

One of these quotes that Zaborowski left us with that held the most impact was, "It's called empathy, that's what we do here."

THE GRID		What is your go to hot dog topping?	More wheels or doors?	Worst thing to find in an Easter basket?	Easter Bunny is hiding _____	What is the perfect crime?
Freshman <b>Sophia Trgovic</b>		Eww, hot dogs are bad	wheels	Jelly beans	at Max's house	if I told you, it wouldn't be perfect anymore
Sophomore <b>Isabelle Dutkovic</b>		Ketchup 	Wheels	Pennies 	On an Island	Stealing a book
Junior <b>Izzy Drischler</b>		Mustard 	Everything has wheels	Stale saltines	In the walls	Well-timed arson
Senior <b>Isabel Dean</b>		Ketchup and mustard	doors		In the grass	Double axe murder
Faculty <b>Mrs. Wilcox</b>		Pickles	Not this again!	Black licorice or jelly beans	His identity	stealing books

# Looking back at when Snow Days meant a day off

by Addison Kania

As the calendar turns to March, the threat of winter weather delays or cancellations decreases, even if we did just have several inches of snow on March 12. But even as snow for this year fades away, the traditional snow days are also disappearing.

Snow days were an integral part of many people's childhoods. Unfortunately, now that virtual learning is set in place, snow days will just be another day of school, just one from home that is online. Although this does allow for a full spring break since days will no longer be cut off due for make-up days, this still seems like it will leave something missing from the childhood of students today.

They will no longer know what it feels like to wake up, having watched the weather reports the night before, and wondering if they would get a delay or have a day off. Kids would wait by the TV or radio or phone to know if their school was delayed or canceled due to the snow.

When canceled, kids were able to play in the snow all day long, making up all kinds of different ways they could have fun. Kids these days will never have those memories so The Oracle asked some teachers to reminisce on snow days from their childhood:

**Mr. Tom Cooper**

"Coming from Massachusetts, we always had at LEAST a couple of snow days every year (even though the town was well prepared for snow), and I remember them as an integral part of my childhood. I used to wake up extra early on days when snow was forecast and quickly flip through the various local morning news channels hoping to see my school's name appear on the scroll at the bottom (this was before email and the internet was used for EVERY-

THING, and that was the way you would find out). Looking back, I feel like the anticipation was half the fun of the snow day... Later, I'd meet up with my friends across the street and have snowball fights with the paperboy and when I was in high school we used to go down to the field and play football in foot deep snow. Unexpected days off were a fun part of childhood. Another funny story I often tell people is how when my mom was growing up her superintendent wouldn't cancel school unless the snow was "up to his knees"; the problem was that he was 6'7"...

In all seriousness though, I respect the fact that technology is making snow days obsolete. That said, it is a bit sad that moving forward people might not be able to enjoy that part of being a kid."

**Mr. George Tepshich**

"I grew up surrounded by farms. We had an old snowmobile, so a snow day when I was growing up consisted of a lot of shoveling and then riding the snowmobile all day around the farms. One time when I was a teenager, it once snowed for three days straight. The snow was up to my waist and everything was shut down for a week. My brother and I rode to the local grocery store on a snowmobile to pick up supplies. I felt like I was in Alaska!"

**Mrs. Holly McCarthy**

"Snow Days' from my childhood always included sledding and hot cocoa, but for some reason we never sat on the sleds, we stood on them and since my backyard was a hill with a fence at the bottom, you had to bail out before you got to that point and let the sled just hit the fence. My sister and neighbor both slid right underneath it without a single injury! IT WAS AWESOME! And, like I said...it was always complete with hot cocoa and sitting with our feet by the vents to warm-up,



even though my mom packed us up in our snow gear so tightly we could barely move (which is probably why we never broke bones doing the crazy things we did)."

**Mrs. Anne Loudon**

"Back in my day, we didn't have the internet so the only way we would find out about snow days was on KDKA radio. This is how it happened every time in elementary school. In high school, my whole life on a snow day, we would be at the bus stop for an hour and then my mom would be like, 'hey KDKA said there is no school'. They would read every school and Shaler is at the end of the alphabet. I lived by Shaler McDonald's so when I was in high school, my whole family worked there. We could walk there so whenever there was a snow day, immediately they would call me into work so those were my snow days."

**Ms. Val Scott**

"So when I was in grade school, we had a blizzard. School was closed for almost a week. I remember getting all bundled up and going outside to help my dad and mom shovel out their cars. All of the neighbors were outside doing the same. Then, my brother and I tried to make an igloo in our backyard.

We weren't successful but we tried. It was a fabulous week! No school work...we picked a new "snow" activity to do everyday. We went sled riding; played with our dog in the snow; made snow angels; etc. We didn't have any idea what other people were doing. We just spent a lot of family time together without stress!"

**Mr. Tony Sarkis**

"When I was in third or fourth grade, my mom would have her clock-radio on in her bedroom. Me, three brothers, and my sister were all in grade/high school at the time, so when there was the potential for a snow day, we would all 'assemble' in Mom's room for the reading of all the cancellations on the radio. At that time, EVERY INDIVIDUAL delay or cancellation had to be actually read. All I can think about is how my Mom would love having us all in her room in the morning, and how my poor father, knowing that he HAD to go to work no matter what, was just trying to get a few last minutes of sleep! I often wonder if that poor man was hoping we'd get a snow day more than we were because as soon as we heard our school read, we would celebrate, then run off back to bed or to the sleds!"

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# Brown living out his dream as Pirates broadcaster

by Dominic DiTommaso

As Sid Bream slid across home plate, sending the Pirates home in Game 7 of the 1992 NLCS, in slid what has now been nearly 30 years of losing baseball in Pittsburgh. The Pirates had 20 losing seasons after that infamous game in 1992. Last season was the fifth year in the past six that the Pirates have finished the season with a losing record.

Yet, despite all the losses, the one win Pirates fans have been able to count on for almost three decades has been the voice of their franchise, Greg Brown.

Brown, set to begin his 28th year with Pittsburgh, has called the third-most Pirates broadcast games in club history and will be behind the mic once again for the upcoming 2022 season. Brown will tell you, though, just being able to broadcast for the Pittsburgh Pirates, the team of his childhood, is a dream he never thought could have come true.

Brown grew up in central Pennsylvania, and despite him now being most associated with baseball, it was football that was Brown's first love.

"The earliest sports memory I have is I became a Chicago Bears fan when I was about eight years old," Brown said. "I remember vividly watching one of those NFL Film videos of Gale Sayers. It was one of those things that was in slow-mo and they set it to music. I became transfixed watching this video of what I thought was poetry in motion. I fell in love with him and his story."

Not long after, around the age of 10, Brown fell in love with the Pirates with help from his dad.

"My father would have business in Pittsburgh often," Brown recalled. "I broke my elbow [falling] off my bicycle and was in traction for two weeks in the hospital. I was miserable. He promised me that if I listened to the doctors and nurses, he would take me to Pittsburgh with him on a trip and we'd see a baseball game. It was not long after Three Rivers Stadium opened that I went to my first game. I remember being in the upper deck with not very good seats. I remember just loving that experience, the atmosphere. I thought it was so cool to be at a major league game. That kind of set me on the path to want to go to more games. I went to as many as I could from that point forward."

The future voice of the team was able to enjoyed some of his favorite players from Willie Stargell and Dave Parker to Omar Moreno and Kent Tekulve. He also began to realize who he enjoyed hearing call the games most, including the likes of Pirate announcers Milo Hamilton and Lanny Frattare, Harry Kalas in Philadelphia, Chuck Thompson in Baltimore, Jack Buck in St. Louis, and even NFL announcers Merrill Reese with the Eagles and Joe McConnell with the Bears.

Eventually, Brown began to impersonate his favorite broadcasters.

"When I was playing sports on the playground, not only was I playing but I was also announcing," Brown said. "When [my friends] were playing against me, I would be announcing the game."

When Brown realized he wasn't going to be able to make it as an athlete, he shifted his focus to broadcasting, specifically for the Pirates. He enrolled at Point Park College, and set his sights on working for his favorite team.

"If I could just someday work for the Pirates, somehow, someday," Brown said. "Truthfully, I would've been a peanut vendor. I would serve Coke. I never thought of myself as an announcer until I started working for the Pirates and got to know Lanny and Jim Rooker. After high school, it became a real dream. I don't know how realistic it was, but I



Greg Brown preparing for a Pirates in the broadcast booth in Detroit (Matt Persak, Pittsburgh Post Gazette)

thought that would be the ultimate."

Despite being with the Pirates in non-broadcasting roles for a decade, Brown still had to work his way up through the business to achieve his dream. In Pittsburgh, Brown did stats, promo work and voice-overs and even was the public address announcer at Three Rivers Stadium. He went on to do minor league baseball, hockey and basketball games, and also did sports talk radio and news talk radio. Ironically, it was a non-sports event that was one of the biggest moments of his young career.

"I was on the air when the United States invaded Kuwait under the first President Bush," Brown said. "I just happened to have finished my sports talk shift when it happened. Our program director called me and said 'We're trying to get the news talk guy into the studio to go into full-blown coverage of the war. We want to stop talking sports right now. Can you handle it until he gets there?' I said, 'Absolutely'. I went on for a couple hours. It was very exhilarating and exciting for me."

In the end, Brown believes it wasn't the news talk that got him his job with the Pirates, but rather doing color commentary for the Buffalo Bills in the 1990s, a stretch that included the Bills going to four consecutive Super Bowls.

"The people in Pittsburgh and the Pirates organization knew me very well, but I don't think they thought of me as a Major League announcer. I asked Mike Lange when the opportunity came up to do Bills football. I didn't know what to do. He said, 'You gotta take every opportunity you get.' I did, and thank God I did because I think that put me on the map."

While it put him on the map, his time covering the very successful Bills was rough for someone from central Pennsylvania.

"Here I was, this out-of-towner, moving from the baseball broadcast booth to the football booth of the beloved Buffalo Bills," Brown remembered. "This no-name guy who's all of a sudden thrown in as color announcer with no NFL experience. It was a lot to take on, and people ripped me pretty good. Thankfully the Bills were good enough that it didn't matter as much, but I got fried pretty good in the media."

After one Bills exhibition game, a headline in the sports section of The Buffalo News newspaper was "Brown Gives TV Viewers No Reason To Tune in

WGR".

"The play-by-play announcer had been there forever and was an institution in Buffalo. He was very kind. He took me under his wing and he could see me kind of struggling the first couple of weeks. And he told me 'Don't watch the ball. I'm watching the ball. You look all around elsewhere.' That was a huge help. I think that served me well, and I think it would serve other color analysts well."

The criticism Brown took hit him hard, but taught him to grow thicker skin and be less sensitive.

"Brown adds absolutely nothing to the broadcast. He has little insight," read some of Alan Pergament's lines. The Bills coaches, who weren't fans of Pergament, and the owners of the radio station were very supportive of Brown, and helped him get through the criticism he was facing. Through it all, he learned the important lesson that if you want to be in the sports business, there are going to be many people that do not like you.

Brown remained with the Bills, and after two years he applied for the Pirates job, but he was turned down. He was frustrated, but continued doing Bills games. In what turned out to be his last year in Buffalo, the Pirates job opened up at the end of October, and in that year's NFL postseason, Brown got the call he had dreamed of his whole life.

"I heard rumblings because I had some buddies who knew people in the Pirate organization, and they were saying, 'Man you got the upper hand. I think you're gonna get the job,'" Brown said. "Late in the playoffs I got the phone call that I got the job with the Pirates. I was really, really lucky."

Brown said one of the drawbacks to broadcasting now is that you have to be so careful with the things you say, and how announcers aren't allowed to have the personalities that previous broadcasters did.

"I'm not as good as I could be, without a doubt," Brown said regarding being more restricted in what he can or can't say on the air. "It is not like it used to be. You just don't have the freedom to be yourself. It's a shame."

Brown does try to be critical of the Pirates when he feels it is necessary, but knows that the team is his employer and he can't go too hard on the team. However, a criticism of Brown is that he doesn't condemn the team enough.

"One of the criticisms I get is that maybe I'm too much of a Pirate guy, a so-called 'homer'," Brown said. "It's absurd. One of the most beloved Pirates announcers in history, a Hall of Famer by the name of Bob Prince, was the biggest homer. I can't even compare to what that guy was. Many years ago my

**"If I could just someday work for the Pirates, somehow, someday... After high school, it became a real dream. I don't know how realistic it was, but I thought that would be the ultimate."**

**-- Greg Brown**

**Cont. on page 11**



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## Swimmers happy despite record



by Dominic DiTommaso

Shaler Area sent four Titan swimmers to the WPIAL Championships after 4-7-1 (boys) and 4-8 (girls) finishes to the 2021-22 season.

On the boys side, seniors Derek Forrester and Jacob Bacasa and juniors Lorenzo Basa and Noah Long took part in the WPIAL Swimming Championships at the University of Pittsburgh. The group placed 20th in the 200 Medley Relay and 21st in the 200 Freestyle Relay. Individually, Long placed 19th in the 200 Freestyle and 14th in the 500 Freestyle.

"It's always a wonderful experience knowing you were able to make it," Bacasa said. "But with the relays, it makes it better because you're with your teammates. WPIALs itself is a greatly exciting experience. There's a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment for even being there, knowing that your hard work paid off."

Forrester added to that by reflecting on his time at the event and what it meant to him.

"It was awesome," Forrester said. "It was a really cool experience staying that extra two weeks and going to Pitt and swimming against all those other people. I'm really thankful to the other guys in the relay for pushing so hard and the coaches for motivating us to go."

Bacasa and his three fellow swimmers made the WPIAL cut following a 1:36.78 finish in the 200 Freestyle Relay against Gateway, making the 1:37.00 mark.

"[Getting to the WPIAL Swimming Championships] is a combination of hard work, determination, and the drive to want to get there that to me are the foundation for how you end up there," Bacasa said. "Swim is a challenging sport, but seeing and taking note of the improvements you make can easily spark that determination to push through and give your all to make it."

For the regular season, head coach Ms. Abi May noted that the teams' records were an result of lack of depth, not lack of talent.

"Despite our record, our team did very well overall," May said. "The thing we lacked the most this season was depth. We were able to come in first or second in almost all of our events we swam, but we did not have enough swimmers to round out scores for third through fifth place (since the scoring only goes to 5 of the 6 finishers in each individual event). Because of this, our overall team score is low but when you look at how many of our swimmers finished in first or second places in events it is amazing to see how much we actually won."

"Our team record should not be a focus for us, nor should it define the accomplishments we had. It overshadows our accomplishments since everyone looks at the record as the big picture of a team's success, but our success came from individual accomplishments that unfortunately is not depicted by a record."

Senior Aidan Brophy also focused on individual success, noting that it outweighed the lack of team success.

"It was a good season this year," Brophy said. "We had losses on a team level. We had wins on an individual level, and that's all that matters."

The Titans will be losing nine swimmers and a diver for next season.

"Unfortunately, depth will be an issue for us next year too," May said. "We again will need to focus on bettering our individual and relay times throughout the season rather than trying to win the meet overall. That was a focus of mine for our team this year, and it will be a focus for next year's team as well."

## Titans endure growing pains

by Savannah Schultis

The girl's basketball team wrapped up another season last month, with an overall record of 7-15. Although the season may not have gone as well as they hoped, the Titans still won their winter tournament and grew both as athletes and as friends.

This season, in particular, the team had a lot of incoming freshmen and head coach Cornelius Nesbit described how that youth and inexperience put them at a disadvantage.

"I thought we could have won some more games and really been in contention for a play-off spot," he said. "We also were realistic that the teams in our section were senior-laden teams, so the inconsistency sometimes came into play during those close basketball games."

Despite the inconsistencies, the younger players still exhibited growth and gained experience. This gives the team great optimism moving into their off-season workouts.

As mentioned earlier, the team won the St. Joe's Christmas tournament, held at Riverview High School and St Joseph High School. During this tournament, the team was able to play more of their younger players to see how they do against varsity competition. They also got to see what combination of players played well together.

"During the winter tournament I felt like everything with the team was clicking and we executed the plays very well. I had so much fun playing and it felt great to see that rewarded with a win," junior Bethany Rodman said.

The only senior on the team, Ella Katona, wanted to focus on the positive aspects from the season.

"I think our best success was our overall



growth as a team in our basketball skills and our friendships. Personally, I have grown a lot more in the sport as well. Though I was sick with COVID, our team won the winter tournament, which was very exciting for them," she said.

As the only senior, Katona was the focus of Senior Night for which she was very appreciative.

"I have been a part of all the other senior nights and it was very surreal when it finally came to be my turn. It was an amazing experience," she said. "I couldn't be more proud of how hard we played and fought as a team. We had a difficult season last year with COVID and with a lot of incoming freshmen this year, but I think we did really well and it will just continue to get better with that group in the upcoming seasons," Katona said.

## Bowlers share post-season success

by Addison Kania

Shaler Area boys and girls bowling teams finished successful seasons, sending four players to regionals. Not only did they send Ryan Callahan, Braden Scott, Sydney Lang, and Lexi Pilyih to singles regionals, but both teams also advanced to the championships.

"This year, our team finished 3rd in our section but, since we were able to score high enough games throughout the whole season, we earned a wildcard spot. We ended up making it past championships and were able to get to regionals. Unfortunately, we did not advance, but it was a great learning experience and it was a really fun time," sophomore Braden Scott said.

Senior Sydney Lang was also very proud of her season and the team's performance.

"Overall, we came 4th in the section for teams, but we were able to secure a wildcard spot to championships. On top of that, we were then able to band together and earn a spot at team regionals as well. Personally, I finished with an average of 198 and 7th place in the girls division. I



am so proud of everything I have been able to accomplish this season and how much this team has grown," Lang said.

To become this successful, both the teams spent many hours at the lanes practicing. They spent lots of time spare shooting and doing challenges to prepare for their games.

"We practice a lot of spare shooting which is one of the most important skills when bowling. We typically spend a good portion of our practice just shooting spares. We also do a lot of games such as knock where if you don't get a strike or spare you're eliminated. This can really put pressure on you since everyone is watching which is

good because come game time you won't feel any sort of nerves at all," Scott said.

Both teams put in lots of work and effort to make this season as successful as it could possibly be. Recalling this season, Sydney Lang shared one of her favorite memories, especially with being a senior on the team.

"Senior night was my favorite part of this season by far. I remember being really anxious about performing well with everyone there, and the whole team, boys and girls, were cheering behind me with a fathead of me as a surprise. I cannot remember the last time I was that happy, and it was one of my favorite memories," Lang said.

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## “Hamilton” company manager shares stories — from page 1

a program that covered all of the different aspects of theater: lighting, sound, costuming, directing, acting, dancing, singing, stage fighting, etc. After those two years, Broman realized that he wanted to focus more on musical theater. He felt as if he had enough background in all of the other aspects that if he wanted to, he could always pull them out of his back pocket and use them. For the next two year though, he switched into a program mainly focused on acting, dancing, and singing.

“At NYU, you’re required to take a balance of educational courses as well as theater courses. I got the beginnings of my pre-med work in case the theater aspect did not work out. I could have easily gone to med school instead of doing theater,” Broman says.

Shortly after he graduated, Broman was asked to dance on the “Hairspray” tour.

“Hairspray” takes place in 1962 in Baltimore, Maryland, with Tracy Turnblad as the main character. Tracy had always had a dream to dance on a famous TV show. After much bullying, Tracy rises to the top and teaches everyone to look past the color of one’s skin and fight for equal rights.

The first time Broman was on this tour, he was an emergency replacement, specifically for the character IQ Jones. IQ Jones is a student at Patterson Park High School in “Hairspray” as well as a dancer on The Corny Collins Show. After staying on this tour for a short time, Broman left. During his time away from “Hairspray”, he sent his resume out to multiple companies and tried out for a few other shows. Eventually, the “Hairspray” tour asked Broman to come and join them again, but this time he played the character of Brad, a huge step up from his previous roles on this tour.

“The ‘Hairspray’ tour was a non-union tour. We



performed in over 200 cities a year and even toured 49/50 states, all except Hawaii. We slept on a bus every night after shows on the way to a hotel. Our day-to-day lives would consist of doing a show at night, driving to a hotel for the night, waking up at 5 am to drive to a new show, and repeat.”

While Broman was having a great time on this tour, his time got cut short when he got injured. Although this injury was detrimental to his performing career, he did not let this stop him from still being involved in shows.

“I would still love to perform. It’s disappointing when something like that goes away out of your control but at the same time I really love my job.”

While on the “Hairspray” tour, Broman was said to be a mini-company manager. He always knew where the best restaurants were, the closest Starbucks, and would Google the area to familiarize himself with it. After his injury, he switched over to actually be a company manager.

A company manager is always doing everything in his power to further advance the shows. They are

on top of all of the cast, making sure they are healthy and have food, they book the hotels and arrange buses, and practically do all of the behind the scenes work that nobody thinks of.

“I would describe myself as a cross between a soccer mom, Siri, and an accountant.”

In his time as a manager, Broman has managed a wide variety of shows including “Mary Poppins”, “We Will Rock You”, “Dirty Dancing”, “La Cage Aux Folles”, “Book of Mormon”, “Hello Dolly”, and currently “Hamilton” (Philip tour).

Broman claims his favorite to be “Book of Mormon” because of the incredible, hard-working cast. He had great experiences on all of these tours, especially going to the Tony Awards with “Hello Dolly”.

Currently, Broman is a company manager on the “Hamilton” Philip tour. He has been with “Hamilton” since the end of 2017.

“If I told high school Brad that I was going to be on the biggest tour in the world right now I think he would have a heart attack,” he said. “Being on Broadway with all of these tours is something I had always hoped happened, but I didn’t think I would ever have to confidence to make it happen.”

Through all of his hard work and dedication, Broman got himself where he is today and he readily passes on the advice to work hard while at the same time being good person.

“Work really really hard all the time and always be the nicest person in the room. It will sometimes be really hard and sometimes feel like you can’t, but if you can leave every situation, every rehearsal, every show knowing that you were doing good you will be successful. People want to work with good people. Combing hard work with kindness will really go far,” he said.

## Brown living out his dream — from page 8

boss said to me ‘Why do you find it necessary to point out things like, ‘The Pirates are gonna lose 100 games unless they win the next 19 of 20,’ I said, ‘Well, it’s true!’ He goes ‘Yeah, but you’re a Pirate announcer. Leave that to the critical talk show hosts to rip on the Pirates.’”

Another criticism that bothered Brown early in his Pirates broadcasting career was that Brown was going overboard with his calls. As Brown remembers thinking that type of announcing made Penguins broadcaster Mike Lange, a close friend of Brown, and Steelers broadcaster Myron Cope beloved in Pittsburgh.

Perhaps the most excited Brown got was in 2013, when the Pirates were arguably the best they have been during Brown’s tenure. The Pirates got a wild card game at PNC Park.

“For years, I was saying what a great baseball town Pittsburgh was,” Brown said. “For about a dozen years after moving into PNC Park, we had a terrible baseball team. But in ‘13 it all came together.”

The wild card game was against the Cincinnati Reds. The gates were scheduled to open at 6 p.m. Brown, however, arrived much earlier.

“I decided I was going to soak it all in. I was going to go and just what the atmosphere was like. So I went up to the top level of PNC Park and looked down on Federal and General Robinson, and hours before the gates even opened, there was just a sea of humanity down there. It was remarkable,” Brown said. “It proved what I had been saying the whole time was right,



and that I knew it was a great baseball town, and there before my very eyes I saw it. When the ballpark opened up its gates and I saw all the Jolly Roger flags and people going crazy and when Andrew McCutchen got introduced and he went out onto the foul line and he pointed to the crowd, I had tears in my eyes. It was just amazing.”

In the second inning, Marlon Byrd smacked a home run off of Reds ace Johnny Cueto, who then dropped the baseball on the mound after seemingly being shaken by the crowd mockingly chanting his name. Russell Martin hit a home run on the next pitch.

While that game, and specifically that incident, is at the top of many fans’ most memorable Pirates moments, that is not the case for Brown.

“My favorite call of all time since I’ve been with the Pirates was the last game ever at Three Rivers Stadium,” Brown said. “I had grown up as a Pirates fan. What are the chances that I would end up being a Pirate broadcaster? Well, another guy grew up a Pirates fan: John Wehner. The last

game at Three Rivers Stadium was on October 1, 2000, and John Wehner, a part-time player who rarely started a game, was in the starting lineup. I don’t keep memorabilia, but that day I decided that I was going to keep a big score card and have each player from the starting lineup sign his position. Gene Lamont was the manager and I said [to Wehner] ‘How great is it that Geno put you in the starting lineup today?’ He says ‘It’s unbelievable. Some of the guys are out here telling me to hit a homer. They think I’m going to hit a home run.’ I laughed because Wehner hit four home runs in his whole career.

“Later in the game, the Pirates are down a couple of runs, with two outs against the Cubs. It’s a meaningless game. There are two men on base and two outs, bottom of the sixth I think. Just imagine longtime Pirates fans who grew up in that stadium. I grew up there and spent so many nights there. Wehner swings and the ball jumps off the bat and a line drive starts heading toward the left field wall. For me, this moment stood still. Sure enough,

it leaves the ballpark and I just lost it. I went totally out of my mind. I must have said ‘I don’t believe it’ a thousand times because I, to this day, don’t believe it.”

Brown is preparing for the upcoming 2022 season, and is looking forward to calling the action of a game that he says has been, and is, ever-evolving.

“Baseball evolves. When I hear myself complaining about the state of the game, you get your hand slapped on occasion,” Brown said. “They’ve done that to me when I get on my soapbox about the DH and say ‘Why do you keep ripping the game? We want people to love the game.’ And I say, ‘That’s why I do rip it. I want them to love it more.’ I have come to realize what I want is them to love it like I love it, which is not fair. It’s a constantly evolving game, and it’s constantly changing.”

Brown quoted Ty Cobb from a book by Grantland Rice, where Cobb is said to have remarked “The old game is gone ... I guess more people would rather see Babe (Ruth) hit one over the fence than see me steal second.”

No matter how the game is being played, Brown realizes that his job is linked directly to the game on the field that he is broadcasting.

“A broadcaster’s good game is 90% based on the game itself on the field, not what a broadcaster says. Even though many of us like to think of ourselves as guys or girls that can actually determine what a listener or viewer feels based on what we say, it’s always what [happens on] that field,” he said.

# Unified Bocce team promotes inclusion and teamwork

by Sarah Naccarato & Julia Barbati

The Shaler Area Unified Bocce team visibly represents values that Shaler Area wants to convey to the community such as inclusion and working together. Bocce is a unified sport, meaning the team plays together, and although there is competition, teamwork takes an important role. A team consists of athletes and buddies that support each other throughout the game and the season.

“A unified sports team promotes inclusion of people with disabilities through a sport...the team is made up of an equal number of individuals with special needs...each member of the team is expected to have an equal contribution,” Mrs. Christin Pintar, one of the three bocce coaches, said.

Before each game and practice, the bocce court is set up, which is another factor in how the team works together. This creates the essential skills of teamwork and collaboration needed for the participants and is useful on and off of the court.

“There are 30 pieces of PVC pipe that must be assembled just the right way to make the court before we can begin to play. Trust me, this takes a lot of collaboration,” Mrs. Pintar said.

The Unified Bocce team came to be when Samantha Smyers took the initiative to create the team in 2017. Other schools provide sports in the Special Olympics and Shaler Area thought that it would be a good addition to what our community provides. They were quickly able to gain support and create a team ready to participate in this varsity sport. Mrs. Michelle Smyers, Samantha’s mother, took over the team and has stuck with it ever since.

“Samantha, my daughter, was the first coach... I’ve been with the team since it started. We started off with one team and now we have two teams with eight partners and eight players,” Mrs. Smyers said.

Shaler Area Unified Bocce has one home game per season and the rest are at other schools. The home game occurred on February 14 with Shaler Area playing against Fox Chapel. Shaler Area won the game in overtime, ending with the official score of 9-1.

This one and only home game also happened to be senior night, recognizing those who will graduate in the spring. The seniors walked across the court with their parents as fans showed their appreciation



and pictures were taken to capture the moment.

As the bocce team has evolved over the years, it has come to represent core Shaler Area values. Through comradery, Shaler Area staff and students have bonded over this sport and the sense of community it brings.

No task that the sport requires is done by only one individual, but rather a united force. Whether it be practicing for an upcoming match, assembling the bocce court, finding students involved with the music department to sing the National Anthem, or looking for volunteers for help, bocce has proved to be a team activity.

“There’s a dedicated group of faculty and staff who work together to provide the best concession stand for our fans. Nothing about this bocce team happens in a vacuum,” Mrs. Smyers said.

Mrs. Pintar has noted that the Unified Bocce Team has come to reflect what the school’s mission statement is all about. There is a specific kind of responsibility that comes with collaboration activities,

and it is of the utmost importance that this responsibility is displayed and taken pride in.

“The SASD mission statement says that we are a collaborative, innovative, and creative learning environment,” Mrs. Pintar stated. “We must follow the SASD mission statement to always collaborate on and off the bocce court to make the best possible experience for not only our team but our fans as well.”

With a focus on partnership between the athletes and peers, students have learned to work together in order to establish a common ground. Simply seeing the joy it brings teammates has had a great impact.

“I think it’s great...getting the kids involved in things and having them do it...watching their faces, they get so excited...it’s priceless to see,” teacher and classroom aid, Mrs. Kristen Barie said.

The Shaler Unified Bocce Team has not only had great success, but has also come to promote the significance of inclusivity and being a true team player. If you are interested in being a part of this experience, reach out to Mrs. Smyers.

## Indoor track season produces plenty of success stories

by Ella Katona

The Shaler Area Varsity Indoor Track team has officially wrapped up another season and has just started their second week of the spring outdoor track season. There were many achievements and events in this 2021-2022 indoor season.

The team competed in regular meets as well as events like States, TSTCA Championships, and the Spire Institute.

“I feel that this season was a great success coming off no indoor season last year,” head coach Shawn Ryan said. “Our overall participant level was great, and we had right around 25 athletes training during the winter season. We had several school records broken and SA Indoor Top-10 best either improved or set.”

A lot of the athletes not only broke school records this season, but almost all athletes marked a new personal record in their given events.

The girl’s 4x200 meter relay team was able to achieve a new best time of 1:52.70, beating their previous time by about 2 seconds.

The 4x200 meter girl’s relay team also was able to place 5th overall at the TSTSA Championship meet at Edinboro University. At the end of this event, senior Samantha Hennen and junior Ellie Facher even both qualified for the Indoor State Championships.

“My favorite memory this year was definitely states,” Facher said. “I was able to go up with Sam Hennen. It was at Penn State which has a great facility. I really enjoyed the high-level competition and

**“Our overall participant level was great, and we had right around 25 athletes training during the winter season. We had several school records broken and SA Indoor Top-10 best either improved or set.”**

**-- Shawn Ryan**

atmosphere there.”

Facher also set a new personal record of 7.89 seconds in the 60m, which is also a new school record.

Senior Josh Maida, who had just recovered from an injury, also had a great performance and broke his personal record in the 200m relay.

“I was really excited,” Maida said. “We broke the record for DMR and I got my best PR in the 200-meter relay, which was 23.26 seconds.”

Junior Claire Stevens also improved her time for the 400m by three seconds since the last time she ran indoor, with a time of 1:03.59.

Senior Jack Keenan continues to run times in the PA Top 50 and was ranked 30th in the state with a season-best time of 8.89 seconds in the 60m hurdles with his performance at Spire.

“The season went great,” Keenan said. “I improved a lot from last year and I keep finding out that I always have more to improve on. I came in 6th overall in the TSTCA championships and my favorite memory was beating my PR from last year by half a second in my first race of the year.”

With all of this, the head coach will miss the athletes he has been training since they were incoming freshmen.

“This senior class was one of the largest senior classes that came through the program since I began in 2017,” Shawn Ryan said. “This group has had a special bond since middle school track and field. The friendships among this group were another part that made this group so special.”

All of the athletes expressed how much they will miss their teammates, coaches, and departing seniors.

“I will miss the leadership that our seniors have shown throughout each season,” junior Karina Zwicker said. “They helped to build the program to where it is today.”

There is a lot for both the head coach and the team to look forward to in the future.

“Moving forward to the next indoor season, I am continuing to find ways to grow the program and get multi-sport athletes to utilize indoor track and field as a primary off-season training program with the opportunity to compete,” Ryan said.