

The Oracle

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Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

November 2012

“You Can’t Take It With You” ready to impress audiences

by Emily Matthews

This year’s fall play is “You Can’t Take it With You”. In the play, the son of a proper, unhappy family falls in love with the daughter of an odd, eccentric family. The play offers a humorous plot that is different from the storylines of the more serious plays Shaler has done in the past. Soon tickets will be for sale in the Activities Office. They will be five dollars for students and seven dollars for adults. The play will be performed on Friday November 30 at 7:00 PM and Saturday December 1 at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM.



Jordan Schreiber, Summerly Kelly, and Chuckie Demore rehearse (Emily Matthews)

“We did a drama last year, a Christmas play, “It’s a Wonderful Life”, so we’re going to change things up. It’s hilarious, but it’s also very heartwarming as well,” Mrs. Anne Loudon, one of the directors of the play said.

Besides the comedic aspect of the play, another reason why students would want to come see the play is to witness the positive result of all of the hard work that their fellow students put into the play.

“They get to see kids in different roles than they see them every day because they’re playing characters. You know, you may be in class with a (serious) student like Collin Ziegler, for example, but on stage he plays this cranky old grandpa,” Mrs. Loudon said.

Anybody, of any age, will be able to enjoy the humor found throughout the play.

“You won’t be disappointed. Basically, if you’re sad, if you’re mad, if you’re happy, no matter what mood you’re in, you’re going to enjoy it because it will make your day,” sophomore Roslyn Mizgorski, who is playing Alice Sycamore, said.

Along with the humorous, many members of the audience will also be able to appreciate the storyline of the play.

“It’s ridiculously funny, and even beneath that, there’s a message, so you get that sense of I came here for a good story as well as wow, I just spent a really good two hours laughing,” Ziegler said.

“If you like a good time and you like to laugh and you want to see something funny and worth watching come see it. It’ll be worth your time,” student senior director Megan Pennington said.

Students perform in PMEA

by Emily Pirt

Six students from the music department had the opportunity to audition for the PMEA District Choir and Band. Each student had to put in countless hours of hard work and practice to prepare for their auditions but their hard work paid off and all six students were accepted into PMEA. Seniors Olivia Harris and Scott Hughes, and junior Jess Dorow were members in this year’s PMEA District Choir. Seniors Matt Burlett and Collin Ziegler, and junior Margaret Gerthoffer were members in PMEA District Band.

Both PMEA groups are very selective, with 400 students auditioning for PMEA Choir and 600 students auditioning for PMEA Band.

“As a soprano there were probably about 60 others that tried out and they selected only about 20. So it is definitely a selective process. Out of the 400 students that tried out only about 80 made it,” Harris said.

Due to the competitiveness of the group, having a good audition is important. The students spend months preparing for their auditions so that they are ready when they try out.

“It takes a lot. The pieces are usually the most difficult a high school student encounters, unless they decide on auditioning for college. For the piece that was chosen for this year I spent about six months working on it,” Burlett said.

Burlett has been participating in honors bands for years so the experience was nothing new to him.

“I made PMEA last year and I’ve been in the River City Youth Brass Band for the past two years. I was the assistant principal trumpet in River City last year, and I’m the E flat soprano this year. I’ve done Allegheny Valley Honors Band for the past three years, and will do it this year as well. I did districts last year and I’m aiming to get to states this year,” he said.

Fellow band member Margaret Gerthoffer took a slightly different approach.

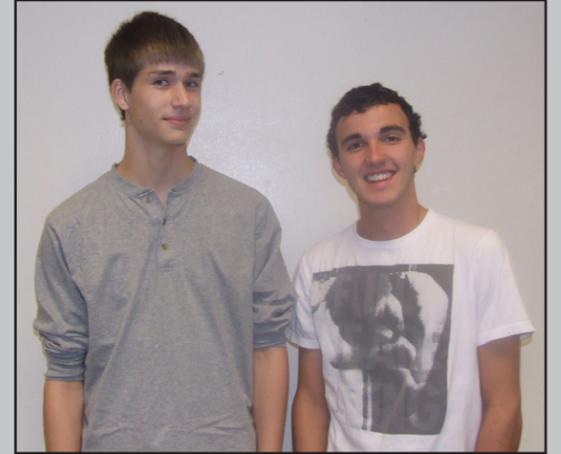
“It takes lots of practice, definitely. I took clarinet lessons beforehand to help me with the piece,” she said.

The culmination of the process is a concert performed with all the members of the group. The PMEA Choir concert was held on November 3rd at Seton Hill University.

“The concert was probably the best choral concert I’ve been to. It was selective and the kids wanted to be there and learn the music; it was pretty well put together,” Hughes said.

The PMEA Band concert will be on Sunday November 25th at Carnegie Hall.

Two selected National Merit semi-finalists



Zach Reuss and Collin Ziegler (The Oracle)

by Casey Funtal

Every year students from all over the nation take the PSAT (preliminary SAT). This year two seniors, Zach Reuss and Collin Ziegler both qualified for the National Merit Scholarship because of how well they did on their PSATs.

The National Merit Scholarship is a scholarship that is attainable by doing exceptionally well on the PSAT or the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). Approximately 1.5 million students take these exams each year and are eligible to receive the National Merit Scholarship. Out of the 1.5 million, roughly 50,000 students with the highest combined score of critical reading, writing skills, and mathematics qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.

There are three categories that students can fall under in the National Merit Scholarship: Commended Students, Semi-finalists, and finalists. Depending on how students score on the test determines which category they are placed in. There is no advancing from one category to the next, and the winners are selected only from the finalist section.

“I scored in the top 34,000 students to qualify as a semi-finalist. I would have had to score in the top 16,000 (to be a finalist). Unfortunately, I will never know how close I was to that top 16,000,” said Collin.

Getting into the top 34,000 is a great accomplishment in itself. What is even more impressive is the fact that neither Reuss nor Ziegler prepared for the PSAT. Both students were concerned with gauging their abilities for the actual SATs, and Reuss even admits that he was not aware that the National Merit Scholarship even existed.

“I got called down to the office. I freaked out. I thought that I was in trouble, but then Mr. Royall told me that I won some award, I was more relieved than happy,” Reuss said.

Collin shared a similar story about how terrified he was to be called down to the office, only to find out that he was being congratulated.

The scholarship shows a high level of academic recognition and looks good on a college résumé.

“I’ve included it in the Letter of Commendation in my Common Application so all of my colleges will recognize it. It’s not something to brush aside,” Ziegler.

OPINIONS

Thankful for the end of political ad season

by Katie Rees and Emily Pirt

Whenever you sit around the Thanksgiving dinner table, one thing we can all be thankful for is that Election Day is over. Now, we won't have to be interrupted every five seconds with a political phone call from Bill Clinton or some politician's kid. Now we can talk to our families instead of someone else's on Thanksgiving.

Every morning it's tradition that we watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. Now that the Election is over we don't have to worry about seeing larger-than-life-sized inflatable Romney's and Obama's going down Broadway Street.

After indulging in gross amounts of food, you can now take your nap in peace. Whenever you succumb to the tryptophan while watching the annual NFL football game your sweet dreams will not be interrupted by an ad by Ron Paul, but we guess he was already out of the race to begin with.

Another thing to be thankful for is Black Friday shopping. Without the interference of the election you will be able to buy that special toddler whichever Sesame Street themed toys you choose. Since Romney wasn't elected we can happily report that yes, Big Bird will still be funded by the government. And while you're out, you may as well pick up Paul Ryan's workout DVD because, let's face it, after Thanksgiving dinner you'll need to drop a few pounds.

You might have some déjà vu this Thanksgiving while talking to that one creepy, old relative. If they are continually laughing at inappropriate times and falling asleep on you then odds are you're related to Joe Biden.



But beware: if you run into a Thanksgiving Day mishap while cooking the turkey you can blame it on Georgie Bush. And if you get burned when taking out your turkey, you'll be waiting a while in the emergency room due to Obamacare.

If you're not thankful for the election being over, and thinking of moving to Canada, just a heads up: they have free health care too, and the NHL is locked out.

Letters to the editor

On October 10, several students attended a school board meeting and addressed the board. Several of those who spoke submitted letters to the editor about the subject.

In the days building up to the school board meeting I felt very confused and misunderstood. The majority of people, both students and teachers, that talked to me about Occupy Central Office were uninformed of our platform going into the meeting and made assumptions as because of this.

The facebook group that Sam Bartsch created was helpful for getting information to the handful of people who were organizing the event, but it also provided other students the opportunity to create drama as they left rants about the teachers and the contract negotiations, neither of which were our concern.

Additionally, I felt a little used by the adults in the district, both teachers and the school board. I realize what they are dealing with and sympathize with their cause, but there is really nothing we can do about it as the student body.

Going into the meeting Collin Ziegler and I realized that we could not be "pro-teacher" or "pro-school board"; instead we had to be an unbiased third party that was only able to explain how the cutting of activities was affecting us personally. We were unable to talk about the real issues we wanted to cover for fear of seeming uninformed or childish to the school board.

Overall the tone at the meeting was polite; I would actually say TOO polite. The school board was patient and listened to us talk, but I am not 100% sure that they heard us. I feel like the majority of what we said they had heard before and they were just letting us talk to make us feel better.

I was very surprised when Mr. Giel, the school board president, brought out a printed copy of Occupy Central Office's facebook page. I felt violated

and definitely got the feeling that "big brother" was watching us. I also did not appreciate how the school board had a prepared statement ready to read at the end of the meeting. This showed me that the school board had already made a decision before they listened to us talk; if they already had their minds made up, then were they even listening to us in the first place?

-- Emily Pirt, senior

I am enormously proud of the way we represented ourselves at the board meeting: polite, attentive, concerned, and serious-minded. Every student at the meeting was there for a reason. It was not easy to appear in front of the school board, and I personally experienced the anxiety of speaking in front of the adults who were present. We were all nervous and uncertain about what would happen, but regardless of what was said, we certainly made an impression that will be difficult to forget. Our very presence demonstrated our concern for recent events occurring within the district.

So what is happening in Shaler right now? We know our teachers do not have a contract, and so they are not volunteering to help with some activities as a way of negotiating.

We were told at the board meeting that our parents will be given the tools to preserve any threatened activities. The school board has taken measures to make sure we do not lose any of our activities or traditions. Our problem, then, has been resolved. Correct?

A slight disappointment remains for students, however. We left the meeting feeling even more confused about these negotiations than when we had entered. From what we were told by the school board, it seems as

if nothing is being accomplished in negotiations. Even worse, no one is even willing to predict that something will be accomplished.

What strikes me as even more inappropriate is the idea that students can be used as a negotiating tool. At what point was it declared acceptable for students' interests to be affected by teacher-board negotiations? When was it decided that students' activities are the appropriate battlefield for contract discussions? There is no easy resolution to this conflict, but there is surely a way to come to an agreement without hurting students.

We must continue to stand up for ourselves and our interests with the same composure and attention which we demonstrated at the board meeting.

-- Collin Ziegler, senior

I went to the school board meeting last month to show the board members an example of how the contract dispute between teachers and school district is affecting Seeds of Hope. The board members all responded as we had thought, with not-so-surprised looks

on their faces. A prime example is when Mr. Giel read his statement that had already been prepared before the board even heard what we had to say.

I don't see things changing anytime soon. It is almost like watching your parents divorce. Each side is working towards one common goal and each side is trying to get you to agree with them.

-- Alexis Werner, junior

When I spoke at the meeting, I felt there was little to no politeness from the members of the board. Although I felt we made an impression with our presence, I felt our concerns went in one ear and out the other. They made sarcastic remarks, and some wouldn't look us in the eyes as we addressed our concerns to them. They tried several times to abruptly end the meeting and make the teachers look extremely bad. All I can say is I hope the negotiations will settle a deal soon so things can go back to normal.

-- Logan Hellinger, freshman

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.

Ecology Club finishes new project

by Casey Funtal



Members of the ecology club work on the chimney swift bird house behind the school (Mr. Lisowski)

The Ecology Club places plants around the building's hallways in order to brighten the school up a bit. This is not the only activity the Ecology Club is involved in. Their latest project will shed light on an interesting bird that most people are not aware of, and is sure to draw attention to Shaler, in a good way.

Recently the club used a grant that was piggy-backed off of another grant that they received in order to create a habitat for chimney swift birds. These specific birds live in hollowed-out trees or, like their names suggest, chimneys.

The problem is that these birds are on the decline. Hollow trees are rare, and people today either block their chimneys or use them too much so the fumes would kill the birds. The goal of the Ecology Club is to build a safe environment while learning more about these unique birds by adding a camera hidden inside of the habitat.

By placing a camera inside the habitat, the club is hoping to observe what goes on inside of the nest.

This fits in with the educational program of Shaler's science classes. Anyone is able to access the webcam, so science students will be able to see how the birds live inside their own habitat.

"It brings an aspect home because it is in our own back yard," ecology club sponsor, Mr. Lisowski said.

Science classes are not the only ones who should be looking forward to watching the webcam. Bird watchers all over the nation will be excited about the Ecology Club's new project as well.

Anyone can access the webcam and watch the birds through Shaler's website. Hopefully the webcam can bring positive attention to the new webpage and to Shaler Area High School in general. Bird watchers all over that nation will most likely be tuning into the webcam to watch these birds.

"This will be the only chimney swift bird webcam in the country for this specific bird," Lisowski said.

Apprenticeships offer insight to careers

by Julie Rankin

Every year at Shaler, students have the opportunity to apply for apprenticeships through the GATE program. An apprenticeship is a real-life work experience where students work side-by-side with professionals to gain information about and gauge interest in a career path. Students involved miss a day of school every couple of weeks. The programs usually span a semester.

Run by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, apprenticeships are open to all students in Shaler willing to fill out an application and express their enthusiasm for an area of study. The application fee is \$50, and some apprenticeships include additional fees once accepted. About 35 students are signed up for varying apprenticeships this year.

Because of the broad range of programs offered by the AIU, students can pursue almost any interest. The list of possible apprenticeships begins with acting and ends with zoo animal care and has nearly everything in between. One of the most popular programs this year was engineering.

"I want to become a mechanical engineer and work either in automotive, aerospace, or energy," senior John Booker said, who has an apprenticeship through the AIU program.

When at apprenticeships, students get to experience many aspects and sub-fields of careers.

"Each day is different. Each time we visit a different engineering company that specializes in a different field of engineering, like civil, mechanical, biomedical, and aerospace," senior Caden Pici said.

Some students choose apprenticeships with creative aspects, such as junior Virginia Houck, who is enrolled in screenwriting.

"We go through clips of movies and see how dialogue applies to them and we talk about plots, characters, and that sort of thing, what makes a good movie and what people want to see," she said.

Senior Lexi Schnepf partook in a nursing apprenticeship at UPMC St. Margaret's.

"My favorite thing about my apprenticeship is the chance to see what engineers actually do, rather than just seeing a job description on paper."

-Caden Pici, senior

Getting the opportunity to have first-hand experience in a field is beneficial.

"It really did help me. One day I got to follow a nurse around on an ordinary unit. Then the next I was standing like a foot behind the doctor while he was doing surgery. I got to see so much. I learned stuff that you can only learn while experiencing it," Schnepf said.

Careers are multi-faceted. Seeing more than just the general description of a job is advantageous.

"My favorite thing about my apprenticeship is the chance to see what engineers actually do, rather than just seeing a job description on paper," Pici said.



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Titan of the Month

Kinnaman uses her work to speak to others

by Anna Cunningham

Junior Ashlyn Kinnaman has been selected as the Titan of the Month. Kinnaman is a dedicated art student and is involved in many clubs and activities. She is a member of stage crew and ecology club. She is also a founder of Shaler's newest club, PEAS, which is a group committed to raising awareness of and supporting gay rights.

Kinnaman realized her artistic potential at age seven after drawing her favorite cartoon characters.

"I remember a certain day that I drew a picture of a cartoon character. It was very spot on and I did it pretty well. My mom loved it, and she's an artist too. She really nurtured that part of me," Kinnaman said.

Kinnaman attended art classes with her mother. It wasn't until middle school, however, that she became serious about her art. Graphite, acrylic, charcoal, oil, clay, scratch art, and graphics are some of the mediums she uses.

"I really like charcoal because it blends. When you put a pencil down, it's very sharp. But charcoal is very slight you can build up slowly. It's very diverse," Kinnaman said.

Kinnaman devotes about an hour every day to art, between art class, sketching, and working on a computer. Her artwork is very important to her, and how she communicates with others.

"I want people to understand how I feel without me having to explain it to them, without me having to use a lot of words," Kinnaman said.

Her artwork, she says, is part of her voice.

"I talk a lot and I'm very expressive. I talk about how I feel a lot, and I just want to be able to have somebody see how I feel rather than have to explain

it to them," Kinnaman said.

Kinnaman spreads her time between art and many other activities.

"Stage crew and ecology club are fun. It's hard work, but I make friends," Kinnaman said.

PEAS is a new club at Shaler. PEAS stands for protection, education, awareness, and support.

"I feel like nobody talks about it, and it should be talked about," Kinnaman said.

The first thing the group is organizing is a campaign against bullying.

"We're trying to change people's language. You don't have to support gay rights or even like gay people but it's the language and the attitude that we have with them, like they're less of a person, or they're not normal. I know a lot of people, if they're just questioning or even straight that support gay rights who've been bullied for that, and that's not fair to them," Kinnaman said.

The group is focused on getting the word out about supporting gays and gay rights.

"(We want) to talk about it. To educate kids, to



Ashlyn Kinnaman (Anna Cunningham)

protect them, and support them. The name speaks for itself in a lot of ways," Kinnaman said.



Sept 2012—National news: The high school class of 2012 has taken its College Board exams and the results are NOT good. More than half (57%) of the 1.66 million SAT test takers FAILED to hit the combined score at which a student is deemed ready for college level work. Worse, 75% of the 1.66 million ACT test takers ALSO FAILED to meet the readiness standard.



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Many careers chances in journalism field

by Katie Rees

Students in today's world are faced with a decision that could potentially make-or-break their futures. The act of choosing a career path can be very confusing and frustrating, as many adults are still trying to figure out what they want to do with their lives.

It may seem as if the spotlight is centered on becoming an engineer, doctor, or lawyer in the world today, but many forget about the writers of the next generation. For those who are blessed with the creative eye, there is good news in the upcoming years. In fact, careers in the creative field are projected to increase 11% by 2018.

If you are personable and enjoy writing and talking to people, then a career in journalism and media might be a consideration for your future. Journalism proposes an intellectual challenge due to its speed and constant changing news. It is composed of many branches from writing to broadcasting. Writers for the Pittsburgh-Post-Gazette, Lillian Thomas and Erich Schwartzel, reflect on why they are glad that they chose journalism as a career path.

"I love working in an environment that fosters collaborations and helping others. I talk out phrasing and story ideas with fellow reporters and editors every day. I also love the drive that comes with journalism, always being on call, and always being given the important job of telling the truth," staff writer Erich Schwartzel said.

A regular day at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette consists of constant pandemonium for special project writer, Lillian Thomas. Though the en-

vironment can be stressful at times, she loves the constant feedback and interesting people that she comes into contact with every single day. During the day Lillian talks to reporters to find out about breaking news that she might need to cover and post to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette website. She is also in charge of editing the reporters' stories before sending them on to the copy desk.

Erich Shwartzel writes about three stories every week for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette whether they are breaking news or small daily items.

"I'm in charge of following the news, keeping up on the news, and contributing to the news. I spend a lot of time reading and researching. Every day is different which is another beautiful thing about journalism," Schwartzel said.

Erich always knew that he wanted to be a writer. Lillian Thomas, however, went a different route before she discovered her calling for journalism.

"I majored in history and didn't have any thoughts of becoming a journalist. I decided to go into journalism after working at my first job after college at the University of Chicago Press," Thomas said.

Lillian enjoyed writing book-jacket copies at the University of Chicago Press, but knew that she didn't want to write blurbs for the rest of her life. That was when she went back to school for journalism. She received her master's degree in journalism from Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University where she took a variety of classes on newsgathering, writing, copy editing, and ethics.

"Becoming a journalist is a lot harder than one can imagine. You have to have the right skill set. You also have to be able to write, learn style, and be curious," Thomas said.

Journalism is a field that takes patience and motivation. Both writers for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette worked their way to the top through internships. Erich received his first internship in college at the very small Latrobe Bulletin where he worked for a year. From there he worked his way to the Tribune-Review in Greensburg, and then finally received a job at the Boston Globe. Connections at the Globe put him in touch with the Post-Gazette editor, David Shribman.

Media is another branch of journalism. Heather Abraham is a Pittsburgh native and Shaler alumni that became a KDKA news reporter. She graduated from Shaler Area High School where she discovered her desire to get into broadcasting by doing the morning announcements. Heather studied Broadcast News at West Virginia University where she learned how to present the news to the public.

Journalism is a career that is overlooked most of the time in today's world. The thought is that the field is slowly going downhill. The truth, however, is that this career path is just changing with the times and modernizing through new technology. In fact, there will be more jobs open to creative majors in the future.

"It is important for a journalist to be confident. Not necessarily overbearing, but confident in his or her job in relaying the news to the public," Schwartzel said.

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SPORTS

Schwartz wins WPIAL cross country title

by Anna Cunningham

Sophomore Brianna Schwartz is this year's WPIAL cross country champion. Schwartz finished the 3.1 mile course with a time of 18 minutes and 32 seconds.

Her summer-long training and hard work during the season paid off when she finished almost 30 seconds ahead of the second place finisher. The meet was held at Coopers Lake in Slippery Rock on October 25.

"It was really exciting, especially because I'm a sophomore. I can try to do it two more times," Schwartz said.

However, the temperature was not beneficial to Schwartz and the rest of the runners.

"It was really hot, but knowing that I was in first, it helped me to keep going," Schwartz said.

After winning the Tri-State meet, held on Thursday, October 18 at Coopers Lake, Schwartz had the confidence she needed to win the race.

"Since I won (the Tri-State meet), it's the same group of people that are at WPIALS. I knew that I could win," Schwartz said.

By winning WPIALS, Schwartz qualified for the cross country PIAA State Championship. States were held on Saturday, November 3 in Hershey, PA. Schwartz finished third in the state with a time of 18:39.

"I knew I wanted to be in the top five. I was a little nervous, but I knew I could do well," Schwartz said.

After a good start, Schwartz was in her desired position of fourth or fifth. During the second half of the race, she and two other girls broke away from the pack.

"I was really happy with third, but I defi-

nitely want to win one year," Schwartz said.

With two more cross country seasons ahead of her, Schwartz has the chance to fulfill her dream and win both WPIALS and States.

Schwartz's summer training helped her prepare for the season, WPIALS, and States. She ran 40-50 miles a week and did track workouts.

"I would run every week, and do intervals, where you run a faster pace than normal," Schwartz said.

The cross country team's pre-race rituals are important to Schwartz and her teammates.

"We all line up on the starting line 10 minutes before the race and then we get in a group huddle and pray," Schwartz said.

Schwartz's family and the boys' cross country team cheer her and the rest of the girls on while they run. Schwartz has been running cross country since seventh grade.

"I like running in general. It's easier for me than everyone else, and that's why I enjoy it. I have good endurance," Schwartz said.

Schwartz is still young, and is not ready to think about college. She is, however, planning on running cross country at her future school.

Schwartz's coach, Mr. Mike Dusch, is proud of her and her success this season.

"Obviously, taking first place in WPIALS is good. At States, I think she did terrific. Last year, she was 22, this year she turned around as a sophomore and took third," Dusch said.

Dusch said Schwartz's commitment helped her perform as well as she did.

"She has a natural gift of running, but she has also been consistent in working out through the summer, stayed healthy and did not miss practice. Her consistency showed throughout the year in all her races," Dusch said.



Brianna Schwartz (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

Wrestling team hopes new talent brings team success

by Brett Ford

Last year, the Varsity Wrestling program was dominated with young talent. Despite the team not having a great record, multiple individuals on the team had very promising seasons.

Ted Mazer and Jordan McGonagall both made the section finals while Austin Heintl and Nick Carey took fourth and fifth in sections. Knowing about performances like this gives Coach Drew D'Agostino hope coming into this season, which also will feature many freshmen wrestlers.

"This year we are bringing a lot of freshman up that have a lot of experience and they should add a lot to our team," D'Agostino said.

While there is an abundance of young talent, there is a lack of senior leadership. The only senior on the team this season will be Jeff Nix. Nick Carey will be gone for most of the season because he'll be travelling to Africa.

The arrival of pivotal talent from the middle school certainly hasn't gone unnoticed among the older wrestlers and they believe that the talented freshmen will give them the extra boost that they lacked last year.

"Due to the amount of talent that the team has received from the new freshmen, we will probably be able to compete in our section," Austin Heintl said.

Among the new additions that are expected to immediately help the team are Michael Heintl, Logan Heintl, Jake Hartman, Jake Mikovits, and Benji Kane. Alongside these new recruits are the other top wrestlers on the team, who include Austin Heintl, Ted Mazer, and Jordan McGonagall.

Narrow topics from wide world of sports

By Nick Polito and Brett Ford

* With the Alabama Crimson Tide losing its first game, the National Championship race seems to be between three undefeated teams. As of Week 12 Kansas State and Oregon are the top two teams and would make the title game if they won out, leaving out Notre Dame. However, there is a chance that the winner of the SEC could make it over one of these teams.

* Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger is having an MVP-caliber season thus far. He's thrown 16 touchdowns and has remained mostly turnover free, throwing only

four interceptions. Leading the resurgence of a once 2-3 team to a 6-3 record has proven Ben's resilience and if he keeps this up he will certainly be a good MVP candidate.

* After a depressing collapse last season, the Pirates are aiming to improve their team this offseason. The first two moves I would make are:

Trade Joel Hanrahan for a solid shortstop, such as Asdrubal Cabrera. If Hanrahan has a bad season, his trade value will drop significantly so trading him now seems to be the best idea.

Pick up a big name free agent catcher to replace the less-than-capable Rod Barajas. The name that sticks out to me

most is A.J. Pierzynski; coming off a 27 home-run season with the White Sox this slugger would be a prime fit here in Pittsburgh. Aside from the offensive advantage, he had a 26% caught stealing percentage last season, which is far superior to Barajas 6%.

* Week 10 has recently come to an end and some are beginning to look down the stretch at what teams will make the playoffs. My predictions are as follows:

1) Houston Texans 2) New England 3) Pittsburgh 4) Denver 5) Baltimore 6) Indianapolis

1) Atlanta 2) Chicago 3) San Francisco 4) New York 5) Green Bay 6) Tampa Bay

Powderpuff football game put on hold

by Sarah Breen

Powderpuff is a football game like no other. It's a rivalry between the upperclassmen girl juniors and seniors. This football game happens usually at this time of year. The school calendar states that the game should take place on November 20, but due the unresolved teacher contract dispute, the game has been postponed until the spring.

However, if this contract is not settled the girls might not have a game at all. If there are not get enough volunteers, the powderpuff game will not happen.

"We are hoping to have the game in spring after the contract is settled," Activities Director Mrs. Mindy Theil said.

SPORTS

Girls' Basketball ready for new season, coach

by Nick Polito

The girls' basketball team is expecting to have a lot of success again this season.

This offseason has been all about forming relationships. The team had a full open gym schedule this summer and it also played in a team camp at Duquesne. This is where the girls really "bought in" to what their new coach, Mr. Neal Martin, was trying to "sell" them.

"Even though he is a new coach, he already has a goal for us and I couldn't be more excited for the season to work with my teammates to achieve this goal," said junior Paige Quinn.

The team is filled with a lot of young but experienced players. Two years ago, when the team won the WPIAL championship, Carly Harris and Paige Quinn played roles as freshmen.

Last season, as sophomores they played an even bigger role with fellow sophomore Abbey Conrad and freshmen Lizzie Kline and Andi Lydon in a playoff win over Penn Trafford. All of them have now gained a year of experience and should be even better this season.

There is also talent in the senior class. Although there are only three seniors on this team, Coach Martin looks for them to take a leadership role this season. One of the seniors is Courtney Bauer. Coach Martin is expecting Courtney to take a big role this year.

"Don't forget about Courtney Bauer either, this is a talented girl that will make you raise an eyebrow about the things she can do athletically," Coach Martin said.

It is a talented team that is expecting to be very successful this season. Nobody should look past the Lady Titans; they could do some damage this season.

"I feel potentially we can be very, very good, but we can never get comfortable. We have to improve every day," Martin said.

Titans hoping to continue success with new roster

by Brett Ford

After coming off an impressive 25-4 campaign, the boys' basketball team is ready to take the court for what will hopefully be another impressive season.

Things are going to be a lot different for the team this season. The departure of eight key seniors from last year will leave the team with a void of varsity playing experience. The only player that currently has any real varsity playing time under his belt is senior Geno Thorpe, who will be looked upon to help lead the team on the court.

Not only will the team look different this year, but so will its section. With the addition of New Castle and Hampton up from AAA, Shaler will have its hand full with a talent-packed section that also includes North Allegheny and Seneca Valley.

Coach Holzshu is looking forward to having a young team and with the loss of such key players he will utilize every player in a way he sees them working out best. He's not sure whom he will be relying on consistently as of yet.

"It could be anybody. And it could be somebody different every night. I think that's the exciting part of coaching," Holzshu said. "We're looking at some kids and anticipating that if they do everything the way they should, then they can be contributors on a nightly basis. I like this group of kids and I'm excited with the prospects of what they can do."

In the fall tournaments and scrimmages this year, the team has been very successful in creating team chemistry and finding areas for individual players or the whole team to work on.

"At first it was a struggle for us. It was hard because we weren't used to playing with each other, but after a couple of scrimmages and playing with each



Geno Thorpe dunks (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

other all the time we are used to playing with each other," Geno Thorpe said.

The fall basketball "pre-season", so to speak, was very successful in the regard that it improved the team in many aspects and has prepared it for the opening tip off on December 7th against Deer Lakes.

Going into the season, the team has confidence that it can compete for a third consecutive section title. Despite being young and inexperienced, they will all rally behind the team's seniors: Geno Thorpe, Bill Reinheimer, Greg Lydon, and Louis Ferraro.

Hockey team optimistic about season

by Nick Polito

The Shaler Area Titans hockey team is looking to have another promising season. The team has had early success.

"We are expecting to be one of the top teams this year," senior Joe Dorow said.

The team is trying to fill a big hole in its roster this year. Senior Jake Hetz, will not be playing this season as he is playing in Alaska. The loss of Hetz is a huge impact to the team. He was the leading goal scorer for the team last year scoring 32 out of the 80 goals or 40% of the goals scored by the Titans.

"Without Hetz, our forwards are weak and we have a lot more young, inexperienced players," junior defender Matt Bour said.

It is not easy to overcome the loss of a team leader but the Titans are optimistic about their young players filling Hetz's shoes.

"It has been pretty tough because he was the best player on our team last year, but we are getting past it. We picked up some young players that are doing pretty good this year," senior defender Cam Stott said.

Even with the loss of Hetz, the team still has six seniors. The team captains are Cam Stott, Joe Dorow, and Mike Klena. There are high expectations for these three and the rest of the team.

"We hope to make it to the playoffs and play at the Consol Energy Center," Stott said.

The team has started the season 1-2-1 losing the opener to Canon McMillian 6-0. The Titans then bounced back to defeat the Butler Golden Tornadoes 6-1, tied Hempfield 3-3 and suffered a crushing defeat to Norwin 7-3. The leading goal scorer thus far is freshman forward Austin Martz.

This upcoming season, the hockey team will play in two outdoor games. The games will be played on December 5 and January 11. These games are exciting for the players, not just because it's a different atmosphere, but also because they get more fans.



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The Back Page

Date Night: unique ideas for the holiday season

by Sarah Breen

November is kind of an odd month if you think about it. Its right after Halloween and right before the holiday season. It's almost winter people!

We're starting to think of what to buy our friends and family for the holiday. Our minds are a little preoccupied with all of our other activities. We sometimes get lost in the shuffle.

Date night kind of gets pushed in the back of our minds. So here I am again to give you some ideas for date night.

Want to see some lights to get you in the holiday mood, or go ice skating downtown, how about a free concert? Well why not go to the 52nd Annual Light Up Night downtown.

There are six different trees that light up the city, Santa will definitely be there, there is great food, fireworks, and there will be three different concert locations for the night. This event is located in downtown Pittsburgh from 5 to 10 PM tonight November 16.

This event also occurs the following day November 17 featuring a parade also downtown. Did I mention that this event is practically free without including ice skating or food. That may help if you're saving for that special gift. Also you can impress your boyfriend or girlfriend by telling them that the people who created the light show for the thirty three foot tall tree, is also the people who helped create the light show for the Disney Castle and Eiffel Tower.

A lot of people I know enjoyed playing LEGOs as a kid . They used to tell

me how they would love building all those towers, spaceships, doll houses, race-tracks, superheroes. Now here is your chance to relive those memories, there is a convention called LEGO kid fest. Don't let the name fool you though. It's for all ages! Tickets are sold for \$18.00 for ages 3 to 17 and \$20.00 for adults. The event takes place November 31 through December 2 at the David L. Lawrence convention center. This convention includes many activities for every age. There is even a tower building challenge. It also includes a LEGO race track, art gallery, and even some life size displays. Please use percaution during this event you may bring out your inner child, or you might step on a Lego in the worst case scenario.

Have you ever seen the show Cake Boss on TLC? Buddy Valastro the "cake boss" owns a family bakery called Carlos in Hoboken, NJ and creates cakes that are out of this world. He has created cakes that surely have gotten him noticed by Good Morning America, The New York Times, The View, bridal magazines, and Food Network. Last year he even aired on the news in Pittsburgh for creating the Pittsburgh Skyline cake. Here is your chance to see this master baker in action. On November 28 he will be at the Benedum Center, having cake demonstrations and ideas of what to bake for the holiday season. Tickets are starting as low as \$26.50 and are on sale now. Go check out this master cake artist and see the magic for yourself!

Just remember to relax and have fun. Take some time to look at all of those holiday lights at Light Up Night, see some life size LEGO sculptures, and get a look at some holiday baked goods. Also be sure to get lots of turkey and pumpkin pie, during your Thanksgiving break.

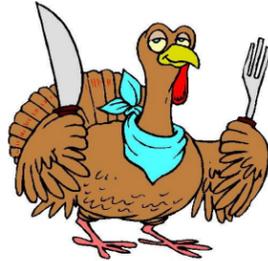
How to... properly feast on Thanksgiving

by Julie Rankin

Thanks to the Pilgrims of the past (or should we thank the Church of England?), the greatest holiday ever was born: Thanksgiving. We now have a whole day dedicated to eating, and we even get off of school for it. So break out those elastic waist bands and scope-out your spot on the couch, because it's going to be a long, enjoyable day.

First and foremost, it's custom that you name your turkey, just like Honey Boo Boo and her family name their road kill before they eat it. And no, 'Dinner' is not sufficient enough of a name. Maybe name it after an aunt or uncle you find particularly displeasing.

Speaking of relatives, don't waste time talking to them at the dinner table. They truly don't care how high school is treating you. They already know how awful it is. They were there once, and if they weren't, they've seen *Mean Girls*. Skip the monotonous conversation. Why talk when you can eat?



In order to consume as much as possible, don't waste stomach space on liquids; dehydration is only a minor inconvenience. This can be combated by dousing everything in gravy. Also, this is not the time for presentation; your plate should be a mountain of food with no empty spaces. Sure, Martha Stewart wouldn't approve, but who cares, she's a criminal anyway.

I have an extra stomach for dessert. If you weren't born with this biological gift, that's no excuse to skip out. Pumpkin, Pecan, Apple, and Blackberry; Thanksgiving is the holiday for pie, not for poser desserts like fruit cake and bread pudding. I'm convinced the recipe for fruit cake contains many unnatural ingredients and I'm almost positive bread pudding sits in your stomach for years on end. If you're not choosing pie you're choosing wrong.

Finally, find your spot to collapse when you slip into a food-induced coma that you'll have four days to recover from. You may feel like a gluttonous pig but hey, Y.O.L.O.

10 Things I hate about Scary Movies

**I hate how unrealistic the plots are
I don't think a demon is living in my TV,
but whatever**

**I hate how the movies never end
Wow, you created Saw VII, gee that's
clever**

**I hate how stupid the characters are
I wouldn't go investigate that if I were
you.**

**I hate how everything is so predictable
Oh, so you're going to follow him too?**

**I hate how the victims can never escape
Seriously, Michael Myers WALKS so just
pick up the pace.**

**I hate how the victim always trips when
trying to run away
Looks like you forget to tie your shoe
lace.**

**I hate the "home videos" from the Blair
Witch Project**

**That style is getting old.
I hate "Paranormal Activity"
Those movies are seriously comedic
gold.**

**I hate how fake all the special effects are
Is that blood or tomato juice?**

**I hate how no one can see the surprise
ending coming**

**Scary movies are made poorly and
there's just no excuse.**

-- Emily Pirt

SCG SHALER CULTURE GRID		Where is your favorite place to shop on Black Friday?	When do you start listening to Christmas music?	How many times a day do you eat on Thanksgiving?	Apple or Pumpkin Pie?
	Senior Diana Cook	I work on Black Friday	November	Twice 	Pumpkin
	Junior Matt Pcntzloff	The Mall	Beginning of December 	Two times	Pumpkin
	Junior Mathew McFadden	Walmart	Christmas	Four Times	Apple
	Senior Layne Baker	Best Buy	December 26th	I don't stop	Apple