

# The Oracle

Volume 39 Issue 5

Student Newspaper Of Shaler Area High School

March 2011

## District has high hopes for this year's PSSA exams

by Taylor Miksic

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is coming around the bend once again. "March Madness" is this year's theme for the state wide tests.

These tests are designed to measure the amount of information each student has retained throughout years of schooling. It is administered to see if students and districts are meeting the standards set by the state.

Students in grades 3 through 8 as well as 11 are tested on math and reading; grades 5, 8, and 11 are tested on writing; and grades 4, 8, and 11 are assessed in science.

Contrary to popular belief among the student body, Assistant Principal JoAnne Freed has stated that the school district does not receive money based on how high the scores are. However, each student's "scores are posted on the transcript, so the colleges do see them," Guidance Counselor Debbie Stepnick said.

To help the students prepare to take this very important test, the "blitz" was used last year. The blitz was a series of questions that students could answer to win prizes. The questions were announced in homeroom. Students could submit their answers before first period the day after they received the question in the main office.

After establishing the blitz, "both of [Shaler Area's] scores in reading and math went up," said activities director, Mindy Thiel. The overall reading scores increased from 65.9% to 74.1% and math increased from 59.9% up to 62.8%.

The kick-off assembly for the March Madness questions was Monday February 28, but the actual questions began March 1. Every Tuesday and Thursday juniors got questions during homeroom, but are also able to go online to the PSSA website to get additional questions for further practice.

Junior Lauren Nyman said that she participated in the questions because "it will be good practice."

There were eight days of questions with two questions per day (one reading and one math). In or-

der to motivate students to participate, prizes (computers, flat screen TV's, and digital cameras for example) are awarded to those who answered all 16 questions right.

With the practice and preparation, students should feel more ready to take the tests.

"I'm not too nervous, but I'm not looking forward to taking them," said Nyman.

Senior John Schwab who took the tests last year said that he "thought they were conducted efficiently," and he felt well equipped to take the state assessment tests.

On March 18 there will be a "wrap up" assembly for juniors to get them in the test taking mind set. This assembly will hopefully make juniors aware that the test is important, colleges do see the scores, and motivate them to take them seriously and do their best.

Testing begins March 21. Juniors will be testing in reading and math from March 21 through 24, writing March 30- April 1 and finally science the 4, 5, and 6 of April.

## Students don't disappoint with sold out rendition of *The Wizard of Oz*

by Steve Kimpel

One week into the Shaler Area High School production of "The Wizard of Oz" and the play is already providing a new look of the old classic. Following in the footsteps of their previous productions, the cast is looking to make the second weekend as successful as the first.

Although the cast and crew are striving to make their theatrical success from past years consistent, the entire group of students working on the play is adding some new elements to the play in an attempt to heighten the level of difficulty and entertainment.

"There are several unique factors that play into this year's musical. There will be a lot of "flying" throughout the entire musical and some really eye-catching costumes. In addition, several elementary school children will be participating as munchkins, so there are a lot of people involved. The whole show is filled with special effects as well," senior dance specialist and theatrical veteran Laura Zagorski stated.

Unlike the previous plays and versions of "The Wizard of Oz" this edition of the classic will include, with the help of the Las Vegas Flight Crew, numerous acrobatic stunts throughout the play. This play was not only fantastic last weekend because of the numerous special effects, but also because of the gifted and practiced cast.

"Even after the loss of our very talented seniors, we still have a fantastic cast of fun, talented, and exceptional actors," senior Ray Alvarado stated.

As with many other high school performances this year's production provides an excellent opportunity for some new faces to appear and for some of the veteran upperclassmen an opportunity to step up to principle characters.

"The audience is especially going to enjoy the

characters [of the lion] Ray Alvarado, [the tin man] Collin Ziegler, and [the scare crow] Clint Bliel," Zagorski stated when asked about the theatrical talent involved in the production.

While the actors and actresses should all be indi-



The Wizard of Oz cast (Steve Kimpel)

vidually commended, the director and Shaler chorus teacher, Miss Demsey, should also be commended for her numerous hours of work and dedication.

"She is organized, hardworking, and truly has a creative and positive outlook on this year's performance," Alvarado stated.

Several others involved in the play including munchkin band leader, Madi Irvin, pit member,

Cont. on page 2

## Little qualifies as National Merit finalist

by Amity Hudak

For the second year in a row, a Shaler Area student has qualified to be a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. Senior Alexa Little will now compete with roughly 8,000 other finalists for numerous scholarships which will be given sometime in the spring.

Unbeknownst to many students taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test or the PSAT/NMSQT, their scores are automatically entered into the National Merit Scholarship program. Through this, the numbers are broken down and 15,000 students become semifinalists. These 15,000 are then broken down to 8,000 test takers. These students have then reached finalist status.

"Anyone who scores within the 99 percentile for their state is designated a semifinalist. The semifinalists then have to earn a similar score on their SATs, supply information on their extracurricular achievements, and write a personal statement essay. The college Board uses this information to select finalists and, eventually, scholarship winners," Little said.

The whole process takes a little over a year and these qualifiers can never be sure as to when they will learn if they made it to the next level or not.

"I was pulled out of Honors Economics by Mr. Royall and Mrs. Thiel, who gave me a certificate and told me I had been designated a National Merit Finalist," Little said. "We all were very excited! The competition takes a little over a year, so this round of results caught me off guard -- in a good way!"

With these test results and Little's other achievements on her résumé, it is no surprise that upon her graduation from Shaler Area High School she strives to attend an ivy league school.

"I hope to be accepted to Yale University in April to study linguistics. Eventually I want to earn my PhD in linguistics and work in the field to document and preserve endangered languages," Little said.

If Little goes on to become a winner, College Board will notify her in March.

# Alexa Little saves languages one step at a time

by Kelsey Meehan

Though the exact number of endangered languages is constantly changing, researchers estimate that approximately 60-80% of all spoken languages will one day be considered “endangered”. A language is considered to be endangered if it is at risk for falling out of use. If there are no longer any native speakers of a given language, it is considered to be dead; eventually, if no one speaks the language, it is considered to be extinct. In an effort to raise awareness about endangered languages, Shaler Area senior Alexa Little arranged a “Linguistics and Endangered Languages Conference”.

The conference, which was held at the high school on February 17th, featured four expert speakers, who each addressed a different aspect on the importance of preserving oral languages. The keynote speaker, Dr. Mark Turin, was the director of the World Oral Languages Project, and delivered the speech via videoconference from the University of Cambridge. The other three speakers were from Carnegie Mellon’s Language Technologies Institute.

“I contacted Dr. Turin, who runs the project, and he told me that they needed money and that they needed people to raise awareness. I got in



Alexa Little standing with college professors Dr. Levin, Dr. Federking, and Dr. Black (Alexa Little)

touch with a professor at CMU, and after we discussed it, she forwarded the information about the conference to some of her colleagues who would be interested. I decided on the conference with a bake sale afterwards to help raise awareness in Pittsburgh,” Little said.

According to Little, there are three major databases in the world that classify languages as endangered; researchers consider the overall number of speakers, and also take into consideration the numbers of young generations who still speak and come into contact with the language before classifying it. Of the world’s some 6,800 languages,

over 6,000 of them are spoken by less than a million people. The speakers at the conference elaborated on these points.

Turin, a Linguistic Anthropologist at the University of Cambridge, presented a Q&A from Cambridge, and was able to interact with students from Shaler, North Allegheny, Pine Richland, Hampton, Avonworth, and Deer Lakes who were in attendance.

Dr. Lori Levin, an Associate Research Professor at the Language Technologies Institute at CMU gave a presentation on linguistics and endangered languages, while Dr. Robert

Frederking, a CMU Senior Systems Scientist, Chair of Languages Technologies Institute Grad Programs, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs of the School of Computer Science, discussed the effects of non-literacy on learning.

Dr. Alan Black, an Associate Professor at the Language Technologies Institute at CMU, discussed translations in endangered languages, and the process of collecting data to build a speech recognition system and translation system in an effort to preserve spoken languages.

Much is being done by global organizations to raise awareness and preserve endangered languages. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, has set up the “Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger” in an effort to maintain and revitalize mother languages and pass them on to younger generations.

“By preserving languages, we’re preserving linguistic diversity, and the knowledge that’s contained within it. If a language completely disappears, then that culture also disappears. These programs are encouraging cultural pride, and they’re encouraging kids in less privileged places to go to school; it’s about promoting literacy and cultural pride,” Little said.

## Ecology club working here and abroad

by Nick Schmitt

Last school year, Mr. Chris Lisowski, art teacher at Shaler Area High School, became the head of the Ecology Club. Lisowski began his teaching career at Shaler Area in 2005. Since then he has tried to help out the art program at the school. Since last year, the Ecology Club has been focusing on building an Aquaponics system in the greenhouse and restoring native plants and trees to our campus; however, the well and salad bar to be talked about are just side projects to this dynamic group.

“Recently I found out the nurse at Shaler High School was trying to get a salad bar in the high school, so we recently joined forces. In February, we put out a petition for this idea and with great success we got hundreds of signatures. Within the last few weeks we have had a meeting with the head of the nutrition company at the high school.

He informed me that this year this [salad bar] is not going to be able to happen; however, if we take the right steps there may just be one here next year,” Lisowski said.

While this idea seems great figuratively, would someone be more hesitant to make salad from an open bar when there are the chosen few that could ruin it for everyone?

“I think that many people may find this idea skeptical; however, one must think: how is this any different than any other food sitting out down in the cafeteria room, like the fruit and topping on taco day. A teacher could be stationed close by to monitor the salad bar too,” Lisowski said.

Now, as if this was not a huge undertaking, Lisowski and the ecology club are also trying help build a well in Sudan.

“When I was told about an organization called *Water for Life*, by my friend, Brian W., who runs the Millville community library as well

as being a teacher at the Quaker Valley High School, I knew I had to do something about this,” Lisowski said. “The children who the money helps is at a local school in a southern Sudan village, that currently has no running water. The majority of the girls quit school by the time they hit puberty because there are no bathrooms there for them to access.”

According to *Water for Life*, it costs \$2,000 for a well to be placed in these areas.

“Since from the bake sale we raised about \$150, and my friend Brian W. at Quaker Valley is short around \$500, the ecology club and I decided that we would send him this money so the well can be built in this village sooner.”

The ecology club is working hard to improve the eating habits of students here at Shaler High School along with the everyday living conditions in southern Sudan.

## The Wizard of Oz sells out From page 1

Rachel Brand, and dance specialist, Zagorski all stressed the skill set of their director that spanned past the mere play.

“She takes the job, as the director, seriously, but she knows how to have fun with each member of the cast. I’m sure that everyone can agree that we would not be able to put on this production without her and that we fully appreciate her,” Zagorski stated.

Both Brand and Irvin continued to praise the work of Miss Demsey as they found numerous characteristics that really made her a unique and special director.

“In our plays in the past there has been separation between the cast, crew, and [pit members]. Miss Demsey has put in a lot of work to unite the different parts of the play,” Brand explained.

This weekend the musical will be putting on their second set of shows. The final two performances will be tonight and tomorrow night at 7 pm. and the cost will \$10 for reserved, \$7 for general admission, and \$5 for students and senior citizens.

“We actors love constructive criticism and what better chance to give it than after a show,” Alvarado stated.

**First Tan Always Free!**

Look Good, Feel Great!

**TAN SEEKERS**

Voted one of the top 250 Salons Nationwide by Looking Fit Magazine!

4 Levels of Tanning Equipment  
5 Convenient Locations  
Open 7 Days a Week  
Friendly & Knowledgeable Staff  
No Appointments Needed

Coming Soon! Teeth Whitening

**\$15 off Monthly Packages**

**\$10 off 10 Session Packages**

Buy 1 Hydration Station Package, Get 1 FREE!

Bethel Park Shopping Center 831-6200  
Cranberry Gardens Plaza (724) 778-5800  
McIntyre Square (412) 364-8700  
Penn Hills Shopping Center (412) 242-8200  
North Towne Square (724) 443-9700

**The Oracle**

Senior Editor . . . . . Kelsey Meehan  
Staff: . . . . . Holly Doerfler, Amity Hudak, Stephen Kimpel, Vince Lamanna, Taylor Miksic, Ben Mulig, Anna Porter, Samantha Raible, Nicholas Schmitt, JT Schwartz, Shelby Tabrosky, Jenna Vetterly  
Advisor: . . . . . Mr. Eric Schott  
Technical Advisor . . . . . Mr. Jim Nicola

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, not necessarily of The Oracle staff. 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.

# Project Prom: giving every girl a chance to be Cinderella

by Anna Porter

Prom is a once in a lifetime experience and an event that high school students will remember long after they have been handed their diplomas and tossed their caps. Unfortunately, these memories do not come for free. Because of the ever increasing price tag on prom, there are many students who will not have the chance to partake in it. Since 2003, Allegheny County's Department of Human Services has given prom dresses and other necessities to less fortunate teenagers in the area through the program Project Prom.

Allegheny County's Communication Specialist Elizabeth Rekowski, who graduated from Shaler in 2006, is excited to be involved in Project Prom for the first time this year.

"It's definitely rewarding," she said. "A lot of people take prom for granted. Getting your hair done, buying a dress- it costs a lot. Project Prom provides a lot of help and it's a good experience."

Since its start, more than 1,500 dresses have been collected and given to high school teenagers free of charge, with retail establishments and donations from the public fueling this project. In order to give girls the best experience possible shoes, purses, wraps, jewelry, new hosiery, and new makeup are also col-



Just a glimpse of the variety of dresses collected by project prom (Elizabeth Rekowski)

lected.

This year, Shaler Area High School has played host as a donation center thanks to Rekowski. The school has been collecting dresses since Tuesday, March 8th and the dress drive will continue through the 18 of March. To encourage donations, a prom package will also be raffled off. For each donation, a ticket will be received and entered to win a gift, compliments of Studio Raw, a hair salon located on Babcock Boulevard.

Activities Director, Mrs. Mindy Thiel, is happy to have the opportunity to help girls attend prom.

"It's a great idea," she said. "I know a lot of girls aren't going to wear their prom dress again. It's nice to give the dress a second chance by giving it to someone who can't afford it."

However, there are certain eligibility guidelines for who can receive items from Project Prom.

"If you would like a gown from Project Prom you have to be receiving services from The Allegheny Department of Human Services, such as free school lunches, or have a caretaker receiving benefits," Rekowski said.

After dresses and other accessories are collected they are sent to the Project Prom Shop located on the upper level of Century III Mall in West Mifflin. The "Gown Giveaway" is then held March 29-31 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Dresses that are not chosen are sold to the public with this profit going to purchase tuxedo rental gift certificates for young men and to help buy difficult-to-find sized gowns.

Donations are accepted now through March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Human Services Building Downtown and Monkeybiz in North Hills.

## Souper Bowl

Pittsburgh beats Green Bay in high school can collection

by Samantha Raible

Although the Steelers lost the biggest game of the year, their city made a huge impact in the area. This year, Allegheny Intermediate Unit (Allegheny County Schools) went head to head with Green Bay's Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA 7) in a soup collecting challenge.

In the end, Allegheny County school districts collected 86,093 cans, while Green Bay school districts only collected 8,718 cans.

Thirty-five schools in the area contributed to this tremendous win; however, Shaler Area truly stood out. From of all eight schools and central office, the district collected 5,635 cans.

"It was great!" Thiel said. "Every time there is a food drive you never know if it will be successful or not. First day we got in 15 cans, second day 30 cans and I thought 'oh maybe this isn't going to go so well'. But what happened in between Tuesday and Wednesday, the drive exploded; all of the sudden we had hundreds of cans pour in. So I was just overwhelmed."

The competition between the sixth period classes was probably one reason why so many cans came flooding in or the prize of an Olive Garden lunch might have been an influence.

Ms. Loudon's class took first place in the large class division with a total of 488 cans, while Mr. Gaul's took second with 360 cans. In the small class division, Mr. Yarnot's won with 68 cans, and Ms. Ulrich's came in second with 20 cans.

All the classes that raised the most cans were invited to the Olive Garden soup and salad lunch.

Steelers may have lost the Super Bowl, but Allegheny county schools have brought home a victory in the "Soup"er Bowl; helping food pantries across the area and having many people benefit from this unity in the community.

## Students succeed in art competition

Three Shaler Area students are at the top of the artistic world

by Shelby Tabrosky

In the first weekend of February, students Nicole Thens, Klancey Burford, and Nicole Cmar each won awards in at the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition held at LaRoche.

The Scholastic Art and Writing Competition has 30 different categories, including poetry, graphic design, fashion, and science fiction. The competition offers the chance for creative teens to receive scholarships, recognition, publication and exhibition, receiving notices from colleges. Each student must have originality, technical skill, and a personal vision in his/her piece of work.

Senior Nicole Thens entered two pieces: a steam engine drawn in charcoal and a digital painting. Thens always liked steam engines, which gave her the idea, but she has been working on the digital painting for approximately two years for her college portfolio.

"The digital piece was inspired from my own experiences. When I was little, we didn't have air conditioning, so if it got too hot at night, I'd sit by my window," Thens said. "After I drew the majority of it, I let my creativity take over and it just evolved into what it is now."

Not only did Thens win the Honorable Mention for her train drawing, but also the Gold Key Award for her digital portrait. This is the highest achievement at the regional level and automatically places the portrait in Nationals.

"I was really surprised when I found out I won a Gold Key. I'm even more excited to see how it does at the National level," Thens said.

Thens also won a National Drawing Contest for Red Vines, a contest for students to create the package for the juicy licorice.

Junior Klancey Burford created a letter opener, which entered the jewelry category for the competition. Coincidentally, she had no intention of entering the Scholastic Art Competition, and won the Silver Key Award.

"I just wanted to make my project the best that I could. Having it entered, let alone winning a Silver Key, was just icing on the cake," Burford said.

Art teacher Mrs. Barkovich is proud of Burford's dedication to the piece.

"This piece demonstrates her attention to details. She took



Art work drawn by Nicole Thens (Mrs. Barkovich)

on the challenge of molding three layers of metal together, and using a Celtic knot design for a handle," Barkovich said.

Lastly, Junior Nicole Cmar had a collage style drawing that also won the Honorable Mention. Her art work, like all her other works, was a self-reflection, using things like song lyrics, stories, objects, of emotions to help create the collage.

Mrs. Barkovich is proud of all her students with their success in the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition.

"They are happy and full of ideas and 'verve' on visual energy," Barkovich said.

# Assessing Needs. Increasing Scores.

## Huntington®

# SAT / ACT prep / prep

SAT and ACT prep for students seeking dramatic score improvements.



4721 McKnight Road  
North Hills

412/367-7787

1-TO-1 PRIVATE TUTORING FOR SAT/PSAT/ACT PREP



The Huntington Advantage:

- 1-1 instruction
- Critical reading, writing, math
- Test-taking strategies
- Flexible scheduling
- Experienced teachers
- Proven success since 1977

MENTION THIS AD TO RECEIVE  
**\$50**  
OFF AN ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Independently owned and operated. ©2011 Huntington Mark, LLC. SAT and PSAT are registered trademarks of the College Entrance Examination Board. ACT is registered trademarks of ACT, Inc. The College Entrance Examination Board and ACT, Inc. were not involved in the production of, and does not endorse, this program.



**Let The Body Bar help you look & feel your best with these exclusive offers!**

**\$25 OFF**  
30 Days of Unlimited Tanning



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Cranberry Mall Cranberry Twp.  
724.772.4500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.

**2 FREE TANS!**  
When you purchase 4 tans get 2 free!



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Cranberry Mall Cranberry Twp.  
724.772.4500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.

**LIP & BROW WAX ONLY \$20**  
(a \$7 savings!)

Walk in's welcome ~ Appointments recommended



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Cranberry Mall Cranberry Twp.  
724.772.4500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.

**\$10 OFF**  
A Personalized Air Brush Tan  
With valid Student I.D.



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Cranberry Mall Cranberry Twp.  
724.772.4500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.

**FREE CLASS PASS**  
This coupon entitles you to TWO FREE Fitness Classes



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.  
One time offer/coupon per customer.

**\$10 OFF**  
Massage Service or Rejuvenating Facial



McKnight Rd. North Hills 412.364.8500  
Cranberry Mall Cranberry Twp.  
724.772.4500  
Not valid with any other offers or coupons.  
Offer expires 06/30/2011. SA Oracle.

## PA's Largest Family Owned Formalwear Store



Homecoming Winter Formals Proms!

Voted "Best Bridal and Formalwear Store" by readers of the Tribune Review!

5-10 times the selection of most stores!

18 Years of Award Winning Service

# MB BRIDE

& SPECIAL OCCASION

123 South Urania Ave. Greensburg, PA 15601 724.836.6626

Download dress brochures and view our collection at

[mbbride.com](http://mbbride.com)



U

# @La Roche

A program for prospective students and their families

**Saturday, April 9 • 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Kerr Fitness & Sports Center and Zappala College Center

- Meet with admissions and financial aid counselors
- Talk with faculty members about our academic programs
- Tour the campus and our residence halls
- Complimentary lunch for prospective student and parents in our newly remodeled dining hall

Go to [laroche.edu](http://laroche.edu) to register or call 412-536-1272 or 1-800-838-4LRC.

*learn*

---

*compete*

---

*grow*

---

*experience*

---

*laugh*

---

*excel*

---

*transform*

---

*discover*

---

*elevate*

---

*lead*

---

*thrive*

---

*become*

---

*achieve*



9000 Babcock Blvd.  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
[admissions@laroche.edu](mailto:admissions@laroche.edu)  
[www.laroche.edu](http://www.laroche.edu)

## SPORTS

## Lady Titans win WPIAL championship

by Vince Lamanna

For the first time in 30 years, the girls' varsity basketball team has become WPIAL champions. After an outstanding 24-2 regular season, the girls battled through the playoffs to earn themselves a trip to the Palumbo Center for the WPIAL championship. Entering as the underdog, the ladies were facing number one seed and two-time defending WPIAL champion Mt. Lebanon. The Blue Devils were heavy favorites and hadn't lost to a Pennsylvania basketball team since 2008.

After coming out to a 4-0 start, the tide quickly turned when Mt. Lebanon took over on a 13-0 run. After a shaky first half, the Blue Devils led 18-9 at halftime. The Lady Titans were able to regroup and started off with a 9-2 run to start the second half. Mt. Lebanon missed 22 of 39 free throws, and Blue Devil star Madison Cable went 3 for 19 in the second half. The Titans ran into foul trouble when three starters fouled out.

"The foul situation was frustrating. I felt that I had to play that much better, and work even harder for the team," senior Haley Sauer said.

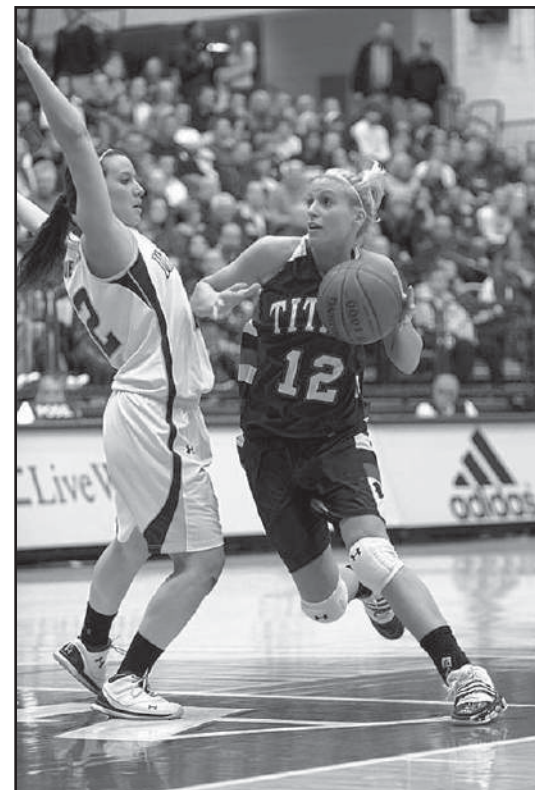
Shaler shot 50 percent from the floor, yet neither team made a three-pointer. Both teams battled back and forth, and the Titans held the lead until Mt. Lebanon tied the score 32-32 with five minutes to go.

"The first half was a wake-up call. After halftime we knew that we had to win this game, and we just went out and played our hardest," senior Hillary Sauer said.

The Titans finally took control after several



(Right) Hillary Sauer drives to the hoop vs. Mt. Lebanon in the WPIAL finals. (Post-Gazette) (Above) Haley Sauer, Kelly Barry and Shannon Powell share the championship trophy (Tribune-Review)



missed opportunities from the Blue Devils, and were able to take the lead and win 41-35.

But the playoffs were more than just one win.

At the end of regular season, the Lady Titans sat atop their section by a slim margin of one conference win ahead of Oakland Catholic. Senior Val McQuade, a Niagara University recruit, finished third in the league in scoring with 16.1 points per game.

After being awarded the number two seed in the AAAA tournament, Shaler took on Fox Chapel in the first round of the playoff and easily won, 60-32.

The girls then traveled to Gateway to take on Penn Trafford. The Titans put up 60 points again, beating the Warriors by 13. For the semi-finals, the

girls traveled to North Hills to take on the 18-4 and number three seed Bethel Park. The game was very close, and a late turnover could have cost the girls the game. Luckily, the Titans were able to stay ahead, winning 47-45.

"Playoffs were tough. We saw a lot of talent, but we played the way we knew how and we won," junior Ashley Domachowski said.

From here, the girls are PIAA championship bound, hoping to take their 20 plus game winning streak for a state title. They play tonight at 6:00 at North Allegheny for the qualifying round.

"We did it. We won. It was a fun and exciting ride, and it's still going," Coach Eric Mozetti said.

## How to win (or lose) your bracket poll

by Steve Kimpel and J.T. Schwartz

Every year as March rolls around, college basketball fanatics and regular fans start to get ready for one of the biggest tournaments of the year, the NCAA Men's Basketball tournament.

The NCAA Men's Basketball tournament is an amazing atmosphere, filled with great games and thrilling upsets. If you aren't able to go to some games, don't worry. You can still keep up with the excitement by filling out a bracket.

Filling out a bracket can be tough, no matter how much college basketball one watches. If you do decide to fill a bracket out, here are some tips that could help, even if this isn't your first rodeo.

### Tips for Bracket Success:

1. Contrary to some popular belief, you do not have to automatically place your bracket into a pool for money. In many cases and on many websites there are opportunities to fill out brackets without any money involved. Do not be afraid to fill out multiple brackets for the tournament and compete without the

— Cont. on page 7

## Record-setting season ends in disappointment

by Ben Mulig

The boys basketball team finished 2011 with a 21-1 regular season record and a number one ranking in WPIAL AAAA.

In the first round of the WPIAL playoffs, the Titans faced the Plum Mustangs, who defeated Latrobe in a play-in game. The two teams met earlier this season and the game was a nail-biter. Both teams looked strong, but Shaler ended up with the victory, 53-49. The first half of the WPIAL playoff game seemed as though they were going to have another close contest their our hands, as both teams went back and forth with baskets. The score was tied at 16 at the end of the first quarter after Shaler made a late run.

Just minutes before halftime, Shaler began making a run and would outscore Plum 23-8 in the second. The momentum was completely garnered by Shaler when with only seconds left in the half, they forced a turnover, got the ball to Thorpe, and watched as he slam dunked the ball as time expired and Shaler took a commanding lead into the half. There was no looking back after that for the Titans, as they dominated every aspect of the game, and defeated the Mustangs 70-45. Thorpe led the Titans with 22 points.

In the quarterfinals, Shaler met section foe Butler, who missed a game-winning buzzer beater and lost by one the last time the two played. The first



The team gets instructions during a time-out. (Ben Mulig)

quarter was neck and neck as Shaler and Butler traded point for point. J.P. Holtz and J.T. Schwartz were effective early and led the Titans to a six point lead at the end of second quarter. In the second half, both teams went on runs which caused the score to be tied with only seconds left in regulation. Zack Taylor would get the final shot but missed just to the right as time expired. In overtime, the teams found themselves tied once again with under a minute left. With 12 seconds remaining in overtime, Butler guard, Zach Slater, hit what went on to be the game-winning three pointer. Butler won the game, 50-47 in overtime. Schwartz and Thorpe lead the scoring charge for Shaler with 17 and 13 points respectively.

In perspective, the Shaler Titans made history this season. It is the first

team to win a section title since the 2002 season.

"We were 22-1 before we lost to Butler, won a section championship, were the No. 1 seed in the WPIAL tournament, were ranked at one point as high as third in the state and were ranked fifth in the East, according to USA Today. In other words, this group of kids accomplished things no team in the

history of Shaler basketball accomplished," head coach Mr. Paul Holzshu said.

The team was lead all season by senior point guard J.T. Schwartz and sophomore guard Geno Thorpe, the leading scorers for the Titans. Schwartz averaged 16.9 points per game while Thorpe put together an impressive 19.2 points per game. But what was more impressive this season for the Titans was their lockdown defense, which was ranked second in class AAAA in the points allowed category only allowing 43.3 points per game.

"Overall, our season was successful because we won the section, but at the same time it was disappointing because we know that we could have won the Butler game and won the WPIAL championship," Schwartz said.

## SPORTS

## Shaler grads part of Steelers Super Bowl trip

by J.T. Schwartz

Going to watch the Steelers play in Super Bowl XLV is something that most could only dream of. For two Shaler graduates, this dream became a reality.

Ryan Scarpino and Natasha McGoun both started working with the Steelers in the offseason. Scarpino works for the Steelers' public relations in a paid and full time internship, while McGoun was one of two interns the Steelers hired for athletic training. Both worked with the Steelers from the beginning of preseason.

During McGoun's internship, she worked at every home game and split the away games with another intern. Her job for the Super Bowl was the same as it was for the rest of the season.

"I worked in the athletic training room many hours before the start of the game taping and getting the players ready to play. During the actual game, I was on the sideline giving out water, getting players what they needed, helping with injuries, and doing whatever else was asked of me," McGoun said.

Scarpino's internship was a little different than McGoun's. During the games he was on the sideline, waiting to report any on field injuries to the press box, and after the game he usually had to transcribe interviews and manage the locker room.

"When I got the internship, a lot of people used to say that I was just going to get coffee and donuts for everyone, but it wasn't like that," Scarpino said. "I would do a lot of things, including picking up the draft picks for the first day of practice, working with individual players during interviews, and writing press releases," Scarpino said.

For Scarpino, the week leading up to the Super



Scarpino stands at the 50 yard line at Cowboy Stadium (Ryan Scarpino)

Bowl was the most difficult because he had to deal

with different reporters and the craziness of Media Day. McGoun however, in the week leading up to the game, got to just take everything in.

"I flew down with the team and saw their reactions and the fans reactions when we arrived in Texas. It was incredible getting off that plane. I experienced the craziness of Media Day, went to Texas Christian University for practices, and enjoyed the city of Fort Worth with some amazing people I worked with," she said.

During the game, while standing on the sideline, both tried balancing doing their job and watching the game.

"I was able to see most of the game, but missed a few plays here and there. The sideline can be hectic at times. I'll never forget the feeling of being on that sideline," McGoun said.

During the game, Scarpino was on the sideline with the players making sure there were not any problems with reporters on the sideline and making sure the people in the press box are on the same page.

"Standing on the sideline is different; I was trying to do my job while watching the game and trying not to be a fan. Also, the view isn't the greatest, so for most of the game, I just watched the jumbotron," he said.

He also had to manage the locker room after the game, which was not the easiest thing to do after a loss as big as the Super Bowl.

"It was tough. The last thing a player who just lost the Super Bowl wants to do is an interview, and I was one of the guys that were telling the players that press wanted to see them," Scarpino said.

Although their jobs were different, the both agreed that going to Dallas for the Super Bowl was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

"You are in a bus and you go under a tunnel and coming out of the tunnel, you see the field. It was surreal. My name wasn't on a locker, but I was still a part of it all," Scarpino said.

"Growing up in Pittsburgh and being a Steelers fan, the thought of being on the sideline during the Super Bowl blew my mind. I could not believe it," McGoun said. "Every morning I went down to team breakfast and felt blessed for having the opportunity to be at that Super Bowl. Although we did not win, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity."

## Senior softball player participates in a tournament in Netherlands

by Ben Mulig

Traveling out of the country to play a sport is usually only an option for professional athletes, but senior Nikki Trimble was lucky enough to experience the once in a lifetime opportunity.

Shaler senior Nikki Trimble earned the rare opportunity to take her softball talent across seas this past January. She traveled to Rotterdam, Netherlands for a softball tournament. Trimble was one of few girls elected to go through the Queen of Diamonds North Showcase and Qsport organization.

The indoor tournament consisted of 16 teams, six teams from the U.S., three teams from the Netherlands, and other teams from Germany, Czech Republic, and Great Britain. Each game was limited to 50 minutes each. The tournament also had a great variety of age groups ranging from 16 years old to 35 years old.

"It was great seeing women at age 35 still playing the game of softball," Trimble said.

In the tournament, Nikki played all three Netherlands teams, the Great Britain team, and several of the American teams that attended. The talent level of the teams was extremely high, and she said the games were very competitive. Aside from softball, Nikki also toured Amsterdam, and took a side trip to Paris, France.

Nikki has been playing softball since she



Nikki Trimble poses for a picture in Netherlands (Nikki Trimble)

was just seven years old. When she first started playing she would have never guessed that her talent would have taken her across the world at only the age of 18. But she isn't complaining.

"I would definitely do it again. This experience showed me that the love of playing softball can be found from USA all the way across to Europe, Asia, and the rest of the world," Nikki said.

Nikki also plays softball for the Shaler varsity team. She expects a successful season and she hopes to get a WPIAL championship.

## March Madness tips

from page 6

complications of money.

2. Many ordinary and moderate fans will consistently, from year to year, pick all four number one seeds from each section of the bracket to advance to the final four. Not only is this tactic unreasonable, honestly, it is lazy and never happens. When filling out your bracket this year, do not merely have a team advancing because of their rank. Pick an upset or two and diversify your bracket.

3. This second tip goes out to all the self-acclaimed bracketologists. There are many different styles that can be employed in the simple filling out of a bracket, but some make it their job to know every statistic from the bracket breakdowns on ESPN. This knowledge, in and of itself, is not bad, but when this gained information changes a normal, wise fan into a pompous and obnoxious fanatic, the proverbial line has been undoubtedly crossed.

4. It is better to look like a semi-clueless fan than to look like a charlatan who filled out the bracket during the tournament. Do not be that guy who fills out a bracket after the action has taken place so that you look like you know it all. That guy is not fun!

5. Do not get too excited. Even though it is a good idea to pick an upset from here to there and diversify your choices based on momentum and record, no sixteen seed has ever upset a one seed in the first round. You do not want to single handedly ruin your bracket by having a serious contender knocked out in the first round. It is a good idea to pick a number twelve seed over a five seed, or something of the sort.

6. If you are completely stuck on a game, do not be afraid to use the GIRLFRIEND method of choosing. Simply pick a team based on the team mascot, team colors, or what team has the best hair.

If one follows these steps, there is no guarantee that the bracket will be perfect, but it will help one enjoy the experience and the craziness that is March Madness.

# The Back Page

## Social studies teacher brings humor to 3rd floor

by Vince Lamanna

**Q: Discuss your musical endeavors; Act 80's, Tobacco Road, being a musician etc.**

A: "I started playing guitar the summer before I was in 9th grade after I bought a cheap Washburn electric guitar. I was in a band in high school (Mr. Krenn played bass) and then I played some music on and off through college, mostly acoustic stuff at open mic nights. Once I started teaching at Shaler with Mr. Krenn, Mr. Haberman, and Mr. Khorey, it seemed like it would be a waste if we didn't get some sort of band thing going...hence the Act 80s were born. We don't practice very much but when we do, it's a lot of fun. Our unofficial motto when practicing a song is, "ahh, it's good enough." We only play a few times a year, mostly for school functions. Most members have been in other bands that keep them busy. I was in a band called Tobacco Road for two years but once my son Nate was born, I wasn't able to commit as much time to the weekly practices."

**Q: What was your favorite memory of going to school at Shaler?**

A: "It may sound shocking, but I never minded getting up and going to school every day, and I still feel the same way as a teacher. When I think back to my high school days, the first image that comes to mind is just seeing friends in the hallways between classes or looking forward to lunch every day because I never knew what ridiculous conversation would occur at our lunch table. I also liked going to all of the sporting events and being in the student section where I'd lose my voice from yelling and being mildly obnoxious. Unfortunately I never dressed up in a blue spandex body suit but I'm pretty sure I wore a festive outfit or two."

**Q: How has Shaler HS changed since you graduated?**

A: "Oh, remember those things called 'school dances?' Yea, we used to have those and believe it or not they were a lot of fun. It sounds crazy but they used to hire a man called a "DJ" to come to the school and



Mr. McDermott (Vince Lamanna)

play music so children could dance and have a good time! I'm not sure why kids have lost interest in them lately, but they were pretty major events. They used to be after almost every home football and basketball game on Friday nights, and they'd have them in the cafeteria, Gym A, and sometimes in the front lobby."

**Q: Discuss the bond of the "third floor social studies" teachers?**

A: Well we do seem to have a lot in common. I knew Mr. Perring, Mr. Yeckel, and Mr. Haberman a little bit in high school but they were a grade or two above me. Then Mr. Haberman met Mr. Williams in college at PITT. I don't know for sure how those two met, but if I were a betting man, I'd say they probably met while studying in the library for hours and hours on end or perhaps during an on campus Twister tournament. Once we all began teaching at the high school we got to know Mr. Khorey pretty well which was a little strange at first since Mr. Krenn and I had Mr. Khorey as a teacher in 9th grade. We all get along great now, even though Mr. Khorey says he does vaguely remember yelling at Mr. Perring once at a school dance for something like dancing on top of a table. I repeat: students used to go to dances! Try it."

**Q: Did you become a teacher because your father was a teacher?**

A: "Both of my parents were teachers, so I'd say that was a pretty big influence on me even though I probably didn't realize it at the time. I remember being a little kid and going with my dad to see the homecoming float construction or the high school talent show, so those kinds of things just seemed normal to me. Plus I had a lot of great teachers at the high school that influenced me. During my junior year of high school I got involved in tutoring and mentoring students. By my senior year I had made up my mind to be a teacher."

**Q: Where do you get your good sense of humor?**

A: "I bought it on sale at K-Mart for \$35. But seriously, any sense of humor I have is probably learned from my dad, who learned it from his dad, etc. The nuns who taught me in grade school didn't always appreciate my sense of humor."

**Q: If there was one teacher you could be for a day, who would it be and why?**

A: "Mr. Boyles down in the art room. I'd love to leave my cave on the 3rd floor and have all of those giant windows, not to mention seeing all of the awesome artwork being created every day. Unfortunately, I am very under qualified and still resort to drawing stick figures on the board in my classes. Besides, I bet Mr. Boyles' blue denim apron would be way too big on me anyway"

**Q: If you had to guess any teacher's password to their computer, who would it be, and what would their password be?**

A: "Coach Ryan. His password would be Football. That's also his social security number."

**Q: What is your favorite cafeteria food?**

A: "Turkey Supreme, of course. Does anyone know if you can order an entire tray of turkey supreme to take home?"

SCG SHALER CULTURE GRID		What is the speed of darkness?	If the sky is the limit, what is space?	What's the most amazing thing you've ever seen?	If you were to create a holiday, what would it be?
	Senior Fauna Guthrie	3.0x10 m/s (opposite of light)	A stupid song, there's no limit	Looking through a kaleidoscope	Fauna's birthday
	Miss Susany	A book by Elizabeth Moon	The final frontier	The Steeler's AFC Championship game	Sus-a-Palusa
	Junior Andrew Dewitt	Dark doesn't have a speed	Space is for overachievers	Mr. Ussia's 7th period Algebra class	Ussia Day
	Junior Taylor Balcer	How fast you close your eyes	Over the limit	My 7th period algebra class with Mr. Ussia	TaylorGang Day

## WEIRD News

FARMINGTON, Conn. (AP) — Police say a Connecticut man called 911 to ask how much trouble he could get into by growing a marijuana plant. Farmington police say a dispatcher told 21-year-old Robert Michelson on Thursday night that he could get arrested for growing pot, and Michelson said thank you and hung up.

Officers went to Michelson's house and seized a small amount of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Michelson has admitted he bought equipment for growing.

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) — Police in Maryland arrested a man after finding his cell phone charging at the scene of a burglary.

It began when a homeowner's son arrived as a burglar was going through rooms in the home Friday. Startled, the burglar jumped out a window and fled. The son called police, who searched the home and found a cell phone charging in an electric socket. The phone led police to Wilkins.