



Shenendehowa senior Sophie Silaika has been swimming since she became a member of the Knolls Summer Swim Club at four years old. She joined the Clifton Park Piranhas, a USA swim club based out of the Shenendehowa Aquatic Center, at five and continued to swim with the club every year since. She is now captain of the Shen Varsity Swimming and Diving team and a finalist for the Scholar Athlete award for Section 2 swimming. But that hasn't been her only honor. Sophie won the Clifton Park Piranhas Community Service award this spring and has hit the Section 2 Champions multiple times with the team over the last five years. She was also a team representative at the Shen Student Leadership Conference the last two years. She represented Shen in the Section 2 finals each year of high school, and this year, finished in third place in the 500 freestyle and ninth place in the 200 freestyle. "More importantly," she says, "our team collectively won the NYS Commendation

STUDENT ATHLETE: SOPHIE SILAIKA

By Jenna Caputo

for Swimming, Ranked #1 in the State for three of those years, most recently in my junior and senior years."

Sophie specializes in the distance freestyle and loves swimming because of the team aspect. "While many people think of swimming as an individual sport, this is incorrect," she says. "Working together to win overall is far more rewarding than simply winning your race. Everyone has to work hard in order to win as a team, so we are always encouraging each other during practice. The best feeling is when you finish your race, and all your teammates are there celebrating with you. I also love swimming because your effort in practice directly affects the outcome of your race. You have to be willing to work hard every day for three months straight in order to be successful when sectionals roll around. I like distance swimming because it's more strategic than sprinting. You have to map out when you need to change your pace before the race even starts, and you have to be willing to push through the pain for longer than when sprinting."

In the winter, Sophie loves to ski and has been a part of the Shen Ski Club for many years. During school, Sophie's favorite subjects are science, math,



Photos by Beth Silaika

and Spanish. In addition to her studies and work on the team, she was also the treasurer of the World Language Honor Society and was the foreign film committee head. She also was president of the ski club, a member of the Math Honor Society, the National Honor Society, the Optimism Club, and Best Buddies. She loves to spend time with her friends and family, to travel, and to enjoy time at Sacandaga Lake boating, jet skiing, and four wheeling.

In the fall, Sophie will be attending Fordham University in New York City to pursue a degree in either Biological Sciences or Business while still doing club swimming. "I am excited to spend my next four years in the city where I will be able to try new food, meet new people, and challenge myself in school," she says. "I am also excited to continue traveling to new countries."



Team Captain, Jeremy Shafer

SHEN BOWLING HITS A HIGH

By Jenna Caputo

Shenendehowa High School Bowling has had a great year, finishing the season out strong. Team captain Jeremy Shafer led the way after a rough start to his junior year season. He quickly rebounded by throwing a 694 series at Ballston Spa. Right after, he hit his first 700, rolling a 713 against Niskayuna and has stayed in the 700s ever since. With the help of coaches, Jessica Aiezza and Connor Chatterton, Jeremy has raised his average up 30 pins from last year and continues to push his limits.

Attending the New York State Pepsi Tournament, Jeremy hit his first perfect 300 and a high series of 762, finishing first in the tournament at the top of the U18 division of the local regionals, qualifying him as a state finalist in the singles/

individuals category in the championship tournament on April 22nd in Rome, NY.

He also bowled with senior Frank Ferrari at the Youth Bakers Doubles Tournament in March, rolling a combined 1764 for the eight-game series. Their two-man team came in first place, leading the scratch division.

The Shen team won both the Suburban Council Tournament and their Section and moved on to the Division 1 State Bowling Championship on March 10th, where Jeremy hit third high game overall with a 277, and the team placed fourth overall with 6,203 pins—only 111 pins out of first place.

Congratulations, Shen bowling!