WE APPRECIATE YOU

National School Nurse Day was on May 12. We honor our nurses at Seneca Valley who make a difference in the lives of children every day.

School nurses serve as a critical health hub for students, ensuring that students are ready for learning by managing complex chronic conditions; identifying and addressing mental health issues; leveling the field on health disparities and promoting healthy behaviors; enrolling children in health insurance and connecting families to healthcare providers; handling medical emergencies... and now, navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank all our school nurses who give their care and kindness to others at SV:
- Acting Nurse Administrator - Liz Williams, RN, BSN, CSN
- Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School - Whitney Corrigan, RN, BSN, CSN
- Rowan Elementary School - Corrin DoVidio, RN, BSN, CSN
- Rowan Elementary School – Melanee Killian, RN, BSN (Day-to-Day Substitute Nurse)
- Evans City Elementary & Evans City Middle School - Linda Starosta, RN, BSN, CSN, MSN, CRNP
- Haine Elementary & Haine Middle School - Lynne Rodrigues, RN, BSN, CSN
- Haine Elementary & Haine Middle School - Debbie Stocklas, RN, BSN, MS
- Ryan Gloyer Middle School (7-8) - Suzy Duer, RN, BSN, CSN
- Seneca Valley Intermediate HS (9-10) - Anita Duffy, RN, BSN, CSN, MSN
- Seneca Valley High School (11-12) - Jill Schulz, RN, BSN, CSN, MSN
- Itinerant School Nurses and Parochial School Liaison - Maggie Boulanger, RN, BSN, CSN
- Itinerant School Nurses and Parochial School Liaison - Victoria Sledge, RN, BSN, CSN

We appreciate all that you do!

SV PRESENTS ‘TWELFTH NIGHT’

Seneca Valley presents the fast-paced and hilarious adaptation of William Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night” as the 2020-21 All-School Musical!

Audience members will be transported to the tuneful town of Illyria where this comedy of mistaken identities and practical jokes unfold.

Don’t delay in purchasing your tickets to see the show in person at the Cranberry Township Amphitheater:
- June 3, 4 & 5 at 7:30 p.m.
- June 5 & 6 at 2 p.m.

Tickets are $11. For more information or to order in person or livestreaming tickets visit: www.svsd.net/SVMusical.

We hope to see you there!

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 1: SVAOC End of Third Trimester, Grades K-6; SVAOC End of Second Semester, Grades 7-12
June 4: Last Day for K-11 students; Early release for students
June 7: Staff In-Service Day; School Board Work Session Meeting, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
June 8: Report Card Release
June 14: School Board Regular Session Meeting, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
For more dates, visit: www.svsd.net/WebCalendar.

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JUNE

SUN  MON  TUE  WED  THU  FRI  SAT
1  2  3  4  5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30

SENeca VALley GRADUATION DAY

Friday, May 28
NexTier Stadium, 6 p.m.
Speakers:
- Zachary Garcia, Valedictorian
- David Choi, Salutatorian
- Zachary Donaldson, Speaker-at-Large

Senior Class Officers:
- Luke D’Ambrosio - President
- Maxwell Van Wormer - Vice President
- Maddalyn DiMichelle - Secretary
- Ashlea Eaton - Treasurer

Additional graduation details and weather updates can be found at www.svsd.net/Classof2021.

Stay tuned for graduation photos in our next issue!
‘A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS’

Seneca Valley students enjoyed a night under the stars for their prom – literally.

The prom-goers took their formal event outdoors at SV’s secondary campus in Jackson Township on May 15.

The 2021 theme “A Night Under the Stars” included colors of gold, black and white; with food, tents and entertainment in the lower parking lot and NexTier Stadium, and concluded with fireworks.

At the event, Faith Condrick was crowned queen and Nicholas Scabilloni king.

Congratulations to Seneca Valley’s 2021 Prom Queen and King!
MORE THAN 550 YEARS OF SERVICE

The 2020-21 Seneca Valley Retirees were recognized by members of the Seneca Valley School Board and Administration on May 3.

During the recent meeting, retirees were thanked for their combined 557.5 years of hard work and dedication to Seneca Valley.

These 27 individuals represent the teaching, paraprofessional, secretarial and cafeteria staff, and will be missed by many.

The 2020-21 retirees are as follows:
Andrea Adrian – Senior High School/SVAOC Spanish Teacher – 26 Years
Joyce Andreone – Rowan Elementary Third Grade Teacher – 25 Years
Susan Brinker – Rowan Elementary Building Paraprofessional – 21 Years
Stephen Campos – Senior High School Classroom Paraprofessional – 7 Years
Wendy Carson – Rowan Elementary Music Teacher – 24 Years
Sandra Courson – Central Office Secretary – 19 Years
Susan Dinger – Connoquenessing Valley Elementary Music Teacher – 20 Years
Patricia DiVito – Connoquenessing Valley Elementary Personal Care Assistant Paraprofessional – 21 Years
John Fetchko – Intermediate High School Chemistry Teacher – 30 Years
Jennifer Fiorenzo – Senior High School Cafeteria Cook – 26.5 Years
Larry Foster – District Delivery Driver – 33.33 Years
Max Gandy – Ryan Gloyer Middle School Custodian – 32 Years
Tammara Gill – Ryan Gloyer Middle School Mathematics Teacher – 21 Years
MaryAnn Graziano – Ryan Gloyer Middle School Health and Physical Education Teacher – 31.8 Years
Kathy Mahony – SV Academy of Choice Business Teacher – 22 Years
Julie Mann – Haine Middle School Sixth Grade Teacher – 28.5 Years
Carla Mantick – Ryan Gloyer Middle School Classroom Paraprofessional – 16.5 Years
Kathleen Masters – Senior High School Personal Care Assistant Paraprofessional – 6 Years
Laurie Melberg – Intermediate High School Cafeteria Cook – 5 Years
Jerry Miller – Director of Special Education – 12.5 Years

Thank you for your service!

Some 2021 retirees who attended the School Board Meeting on May 3 included (from L-R): Susan Dinger, Kathy Mahony, Susan Brinker, Robin Williams, Patricia DiVito and Jerry Miller.
NEWS AND EVENTS

TOP THAT!

Seneca Valley administrators, principals and school board members donned their SV hard hats to top off a notable moment for the District.

A “Topping Out” ceremony was held on May 25, to recognize the completion of the framing of the building, and to welcome in the next phase of construction for the new Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School. Due to COVID-19, a traditional groundbreaking ceremony was not able to occur, so officials were pleased to find an opportunity to celebrate this exciting next chapter for the District.

This builders’ tradition takes place when the final steel beam is placed atop the structure. Those in attendance signed the beam before it was lifted into place.

The new K-6 school building planned for the 2022-23 school year is well underway and currently on schedule. This innovative and truly cutting-edge facility will feature separate elementary and middle school wings, along with a community wing that will house the gymnasium, Creativity, Innovation and Research (CIRC) space, music and movement rooms, as well as an open cafeteria. Additionally, the building itself will be a learning tool. For example, the circular ramp will teach student complex shapes and construction geometry; a sundial wall will measure time and solar azimuth using a target and floor patterns, opening up conversations about the sun’s arc and temperature; and lastly, an exposed section of wall will show construction materials, piping and conduit, which will demonstrate to students the purpose of each layer, object and material necessary for construction.

“You hear the words ‘cutting-edge’ often these days to describe many things,” said Seneca Valley Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tracy Vitale. “But I’m here to tell you that this building behind me, when complete, will be the purest definition of cutting edge; an interactive and one of the most progressive educational buildings you will have the opportunity to see and, for some of the children here, witness. The building itself will serve as a learning tool and I am pleased to announce today that all of you will be a part of that learning effort - and even the legacy of the school. The steel beam we are all signing today is going to be positioned in a way that allows people to view it from inside the building. For as long as this building exists, we will all be a part of Ehrman Crest’s rich and storied history. I think it is a fitting start to the mission and vision of this school.”

At the event, the first official sign with the recently appointed school name on it was also unveiled.
A-Z

It’s May, which means one thing – the end of the year countdown is on!

Students in Amanda Bondi’s class are participating too with an end-of-year A-Z countdown!

They began earlier this month with only 26 days of school left.

As the last days of school tick down, the class will be celebrating the day based on a specific letter of the alphabet.

For the letter B, the theme was Beach Day and Room 19 dressed for a day in the sun and sand!

Miss Bondi added, “some other days we have to look forward to are exercise day, hula day, kindness day and yoga day! We will finish on the last day of school with zoo day!”

STANDOUT STUDENTS

Each school year, Evans City Middle School (ECMS) partners with the Evans City Rotary Club to recognize students who demonstrate outstanding character, academic achievement and work ethic. These deserving students are chosen by their teachers and recognized throughout the year as the “Student of the Month” for their respective teams. This year’s honorees include ECMS fifth grade and sixth grade students: Sawyer Burcham, Matthew Cirqueira-Da-Silva, Jackson Davis, Olivia Hennon, Anna Iaquinta, Makyala Jabaut, Reese Lewis and Owen Todd.

STOMP PARADE

Rowan Elementary and Evans City Elementary/Middle Schools recently participated in the 13th Annual Saulle’s Teddy Bear Official Memorial Parade (STOMP) Walk – a campaign to raise monies for the Allegheny Health Network Cancer Institute for cancer research.

Students and staff took turns walking around the building earlier this month to help raise money and awareness for cancer. Many completed their walk carrying banners and signs and wore messages on their T-shirts.

STOMP participants have raised more than $193,000 over the past twelve years with all of the money going to cancer research.

This walk began in 2008 in memory of a Kindergarten teacher, Ms. Linda Saulle, who taught at Evans City Elementary and lost her battle with cancer in 2007. Today it honors all families touched by this disease throughout our local area.
IN THE BAG

Seneca Valley English as a Second Language (ESL) students have their learning in the bag!

The District’s ESL department recently secured a grant for each student to receive a summer learn-at-home bag to continue their English development over the summer months.

Each of the students received the following:

- drawstring bag
- pens
- highlighters

"The students were very excited to receive the bags and took them home last week,” exclaimed AIU3 ESL Teacher for Evans City Elementary School Ashley Salman.

‘PROJECT SUITCASE’

All children need to see themselves and their peers in the stories shared and discussed at school.

With this in mind, CVE Learning Support Teacher Tesin Amoscato created “Project Suitcase” last winter with the support of some generous donors.

Thanks to Donors Choose, CVE was able to purchase over 30 culturally diverse children’s books that celebrate visible and invisible diversity. Classrooms have been reading and engaging with these culturally diverse children’s books from “Project Suitcase” all year long.

Their “baggage claim area” is where classroom teachers can go to pick up a “suitcase.” Each suitcase includes one of their “Project Suitcase” books and a coordinating activity. Suitcases and activities were assembled and curated by CVE teachers and staff members. The culturally diverse children’s books in the “baggage claim area” cover a variety of themes which include identity, family, kindness, friendship, culture, empathy, acceptance and uniqueness.

Fast forward to a year later to when Ms. Amoscato connected with Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Counselor Malika Christopher. Together, they invited others to share their “suitcases” and were really able to get things off the ground by connecting with SV’s secondary buildings, community members, and student organizations like SV Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment (SHOUT).

SV Senior and SHOUT member, Gargi Rane created a beautiful presentation for “Project Suitcase” called, “Wherever You Go” and shared it with some third and fourth grade classrooms at CVE. Miss Rane spoke about her Canadian and South Asian cultures and traditions. CVE students shared their connections and were able to ask questions at the end of her presentation.

Her message was that “we all come from different backgrounds and take different paths, but at the same time, we are all still participating in the same celebrations of life and living within the same world. It doesn’t mean that it’s bad to be different; instead, think of it as a way to share your own experiences with others.” Watch her entire presentation here: https://svtube.svsd.net/play/?id=ufd554y66v.

“We hope to add more books to our ‘baggage claim area’ and for ‘Project Suitcase’ to become a year-round program,” said Ms. Amoscato. “We would love to have more student organizations, community groups, alumni and classrooms share their own ‘suitcase.’ Through these efforts, we hope to continue providing our students with an opportunity to further develop 21st-century skills in empathy, compassion and cultural understanding.”

If interested, visit https://www.svsd.net/domain/2391 to sign up and learn more!
The Seneca Valley School District includes four elementary buildings including Connoquenessing Valley Elementary (CVE), Evans City, Rowan and Haine Elementary Schools. Not familiar with your child’s attendance area? Visit our website at www.svsd.net/AttendanceZones to see what school your child will attend based on your home address.

Documents that are REQUIRED for registration are:

- Two documents as proof of residency (lease/mortgage documents, utility bill, etc.)
- Child’s birth certificate, passport, baptismal certificate or other certified birth record
- Immunization records to date

To learn more about immunization requirements please visit www.svsd.net/KRegistration

This year, registration will take place online.
To register visit: https://portal.svsd.net/registration

Seneca Valley welcomes children to register for kindergarten, which is an engaging half-day program with transportation that is provided one way. In order to enroll, children must be five years old on or before September 1 of the enrollment year.
ART SUCCESS

Seneca Valley exceptional students had a variety of vivid artwork on display and came home with four awards at the recent Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV’s (MIU IV) 2021 Very Special Arts Virtual Exhibit; including one Juror’s Choice Award.

Braeden Mooney received a Juror’s Choice for his piece “Untitled.” Additionally, Tommy Gettings, Alex Reams and Ethan Bushee all received Honorable Mentions for their artwork.

Since 1989, MIU IV’s Very Special Arts has celebrated the abilities of special needs students (K-12) through an art exhibit held at Grove City College.

VSA Arts (formerly Very Special Arts) is an international nonprofit organization affiliated with the education programs of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington D.C. It is designed to give special needs children and adults the opportunity to develop and showcase their creative abilities. VSA is founded on the belief that the arts are a universal language that challenges people to look beyond themselves and celebrate their diversity.

The exhibit is still currently available online at Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV / Homepage (miu4.org).

ON DISPLAY

With the help of Seneca Valley Senior High School Art Teacher Jason Woolslare, senior artists are “making it happen.”

Students in the Senior Career Art Class created an exhibit, “Make it Happen,” which includes artwork from Anna Sikora, Ashley Matuszak, Arionah Sullivan, Brian Whitney, Dana Walos, Emilee Neuman, Emma Shearer, Grace Johnson, Grace Morrissey, Kenzie Mill, Lacey Eisengart, Michael Palladino, Paige Welch, Rowen Defede and Tia Myers.

“I wanted to showcase individual seniors and give each of the students in the class an opportunity to have their own gallery wall in the senior high school lobby,” stated Mr. Woolslare. “It goes without saying that this year, and really the last two school years, have been challenging for everyone. I am so proud of this group of seniors and all that they have achieved this year!”

Many of the student artists used their talents to self-reflect in their artwork. Some used their works as a way to understand, interpret and reflect on the world around them. Others said that creating their artwork helped them reconnect and they have benefitted from the therapy of creating art in a studio atmosphere with their peers. Some students focused on the depth, breadth and conceptual ideas of their work to enhance their individual portfolios for college applications.
3 SV SENIORS ARE NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC®) recently announced that Seneca Valley Seniors David Choi, Zachary Garcia and Ananya Rao are National Merit $2,500 Scholarship winners. The 2,500 Merit Scholar designees were chosen from a talent pool of some 16,000 outstanding Finalists in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program.

National Merit $2,500 Scholarship winners are the Finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The number of winners named in each state is proportional to the state’s percentage of the nation’s graduating high school seniors.

These Scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who appraised a substantial amount of information submitted by both the Finalists and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects studied and grades earned; scores from the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®); contributions and leadership in school and community activities; an essay written by the Finalist; and a recommendation written by a high school official.

2021 National Merit Scholarship Competition
This year’s National Merit Scholarship Program began in October 2019 when over 1.5 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools took the PSAT/NMSQT, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. Last fall, the highest-scoring participants in each state, representing less than one percent of the nation’s high school seniors, were named Semifinalists on a state-representational basis. Only these approximately 17,000 Semifinalists had an opportunity to continue in the competition.

From the Semifinalist group, some 16,000 students met the very high academic standards and other requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. By the conclusion of the 2021 program, about 7,500 Finalists will have earned the “Merit Scholar” title and received a total of nearly $30 million in college scholarships.

ASPIRATIONAL STUDENTS

Seneca Valley Juniors Veronica Pimenova and Daniel Spear were recently recognized by the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing.

Veronica was selected as 2021 Central and Western Pennsylvania Affiliate Winner and Daniel was chosen as a 2021 Central and Western Pennsylvania Affiliate Honorable Mention recipient.

Awardees are chosen for their aptitude and interest in IT and computing, solid leadership ability, good academic history, and plans for post-secondary education.

“I am grateful for the recognition by NCWIT,” said Veronica. “It encourages me to continue learning about Cybersecurity and Computer Science. I would also like to thank Mr. Fortunato and Mr. Magill for their help in school and with the CyberPatriot team.”

Daniel added, “I am extremely excited to be recognized by NCWIT as I have a passion for programming and look forward to studying computer science in college.”

The Western and Central PA affiliate of the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing is a collaborative effort by dedicated volunteers from Saint Francis University; Penn State University, New Kensington; University of Pittsburgh; Carnegie Mellon University, and All Clear Translations.
WINNING TRADE, WINNING TEAM

Two Seneca Valley Seniors were among hundreds of pupils in seven western Pennsylvania counties in the 2020-21 academic year who studied economic concepts and gained financial literacy skills through Butler County Community College's (BC3) Stock Market Game.

Teammates Brianna Buccini and Zachary Garcia added $67,591.48 to their portfolio and placed first in the region and in Pennsylvania in the 30-week competition.

BC3 honored Miss Buccini and Mr. Garcia and other winners who placed first through third in the college’s Stock Market Game competitions – at the Western Region 2021 Awards Ceremony on May 4 on BC3’s main campus.

“We liked having the opportunity to take risks without having the actual negatives,” Miss Buccini said. “It was nice to take those dares. Is this a risk I am willing to take? Is it worth it? Should I have a different strategy? It allowed us to explore every single type of strategy without having the negative impacts.”

BC3’s Center for Economic Education administers 10-week Stock Market Game competitions in the fall and spring, and a 30-week competition that begins in September, to pupils in grades 4-12. During the competition, pupils receive a hypothetical $100,000, make buy-and-trade decisions and track how those decisions would have played out in the market had they been real.

That teams learn by “doing and trying” allows pupils to gain a financial education that will benefit them for the rest of their lives, said Jeremy J. Kropf, state coordinator of the Stock Market Game.

“It also really increases their analytical skills,” Mr. Kropf said. “Because most of the pupils play on teams, they have to rationalize their decisions with their other teammates and not just say, ‘I’m going to do this because I feel like it.’ If their teammates challenge them on it, then they have to be able to explain.”

Such teamwork and collaboration are among the benefits of the Stock Market Game, said David Huseman, director of BC3’s Center for Economic Education and a BC3 professor of humanities and social science.

“Working with others in a group to achieve a certain financial goal is important,” Mr. Huseman said. “Cooperation is a big part of what they learn. There’s always disagreements about what stocks to buy, when to buy, when to sell. So ultimately at the end of the day they have to come to some conclusion and see how it plays out in the end. I think it is learning to work with one another that is the big thing they get out of this.”

The Stock Market Game is operated nationally by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA) Foundation and in Pennsylvania by the Foundation for Free Enterprise Education.
ONE DAY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Seneca Valley Intermediate High School students recently learned that one day of service can make a lasting impact.

Seneca Valley Intermediate High School (IHS) designated Wednesday, May 12, as a “Day of Service.” Leading up to that day, students and classes were invited to participate in projects that gave back to the school and community or in lessons that supported the significance of service to others.

“With a year that has been filled with ups and downs, we wanted our students to feel the value of giving a small amount of their time to help others,” stated Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Special Education Teacher Katie Wolford.

The IHS “Day of Service” focused on collecting donations for the Global Links Personal Care Kits Project, a medical relief and development organization dedicated to supporting health improvement initiatives in resource-poor communities.

Student leaders visited classrooms to share the meaning behind the personal care kits and the mission of Global Links, as well as encourage donations and participation in the Day of Service.

Over a two-week period and along with help from the girls’ soccer team, Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) Chorus and RGMS Spanish 1, thousands of personal care items and over $500 were donated to the cause. On May 12, IHS students packaged the donations that resulted in 225 personal care kits! The kits will be delivered to Global Links and distributed throughout Western Pennsylvania.

Hundreds of additional items were donated to The Hygiene Helpers Program, started this year by Seneca Valley Senior High School Special Education Job Coach Michelle Eppinger.

In addition to the development of the personal care kits, students at the IHS also participated in making thank you cards and bags for bus drivers, counselors, custodians, teachers, nurses, school support staff, and veterans; a campus clean-up walk; making “Give Back” bracelets; collecting canned goods for community food banks; making motivation bags for students during Keystone Exams and donated money to Oceana.

Lastly, chorus members in grades 7-12 filmed “Stand Together” on the football field to celebrate the day. Watch it here: https://youtu.be/Dwri2AoY_GA.

“Our hope is to make the ‘Day of Service’ an annual event with the hopes of including new district buildings each year,” exclaimed Ms. Wolford.
4TH IN THE NATION

Out of 26 states across the nation, the Seneca Valley Academic Decathlon Team placed fourth in the large school division at the (virtual) United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) National Competition on April 30.

Each high school competed with a team of nine students in eight events: art, music, literature, social science, economics, mathematics, science and essay. All subjects were related to the 2020-21 theme: The Cold War.

The following students won national competition awards:

- Allison Flatt - Gold Division Literature Honor, Gold Division Art Honor, Silver Division Social Science Honor, Bronze Division Music Honor
- Shanker Pillai - Gold Division Essay Varsity, Bronze Division Mathematics Varsity
- Nicholas Nedzesky - Gold Division Essay Honor

“The Academic Decathlon program at Seneca Valley continues to accomplish new goals every year,” stated Seneca Valley Senior High School Teacher and Academic Decathlon Adviser David Reichard. “The SV Regional and SV State Academic Decathlon Team not only accomplished their individual goals but set and exceeded team goals. It was an interesting season without in-person competitions and practices, but the team found creative ways to bring the curriculum to life and help one another understand the multitude of information through virtual practices. I am incredibly proud of the national results. Earning individual medals and placing as a team at the national level is a major accomplishment!”

The Seneca Valley Academic Decathlon National Team includes Allison Flatt, Nicholas Nedzesky, Kason Kunkelmann, Mia Chevallier, Rayan Ghaffar, Nancy Chen, Shanker Pillai, Ashley Eury and Grace Johnson.

AN EAR FOR LANGUAGE

Seneca Valley Juniors Vivian Palmer and Veronica Pimenova, members of SV Slavic Language and Visibility Club, recently participated in The American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) Western Pennsylvania Olympiad of Spoken Russian which ran virtually through the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University.

The participants competed in spoken Russian, a digital project on important aspects of Russophone cultures of Russia’s regions or post-Soviet republics, and in dramatic reading of Russian poetry.

Miss Pimenova won the gold medal in the Level 5 category. She used the photo of her figure skating to demonstrate different Russian costumes as a part of her digital project/presentation about Russian culture. The choreography for her routine was inspired from “Russian Dance” in the Nutcracker.

This annual national competition provides the opportunity for high school students to demonstrate their knowledge of Russian Language and culture while meeting with other students studying Russian and conversing with native Russian speakers.

“VERONICA AND I KNEW ABOUT THIS COMPETITION AS I CREATED THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND VISIBILITY CLUB LAST YEAR,” STATED MISS PALMER. “I NOTICED THAT MY FRIENDS AND I HAD EITHER SLAVIC LANGUAGE OR HERITAGE IN COMMON, AND WE WANTED TO HAVE A CLUB TO CELEBRATE THAT. VERONICA AND I ARE BOTH RUSSIAN SPEAKERS, AND HER MOTHER INTRODUCED US TO THIS COMPETITION. HAD COVID NOT BEEN A FACTOR, WE WOULD HAVE COMPETED IN OTHER ACTR EVENTS THIS YEAR. AS FOR COMPETING, THE OLYMPIAD IS VERY USEFUL TO SEE WHERE YOUR SPECIFIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES LIE REGARDING SPEAKING RUSSIAN. IT ALSO ALLOWED US TO ENGAGE IN RUSSIAN CULTURE IN A COMMUNAL SENSE.”

Seneca Valley’s Slavic Language and Visibility Club is supervised by Seneca Valley Senior High School Latin Teacher Ms. Amy Seelbaugh and was created in 2019 to promote the cultural diversity among Seneca Valley students.
VOICES
A podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

Want to hear directly from the voices at Seneca Valley on the most current topics and updates? Join us in listening to Voices, a podcast brought to you by the Seneca Valley School District. This podcast interviews guests who share an inside look at what is happening at SV. The latest episodes provide information on summer programming and how the District is prioritizing realistic expectations for student learning during COVID-19. Be sure to subscribe to SV “Voices” and listen online here or anywhere you listen to podcasts.
‘SIGNING DAY’

The Seneca Valley Performing Arts department celebrated students who will be pursuing performing arts related fields in college by organizing its first ever “Signing Day.” Students and families were invited to participate by having a picture taken to commemorate their decision. The Seneca Valley Performing Arts department includes band, choir, orchestra, dance, theatre and video production students.

Ethan Bannon, Penn State University, Film/TV Production

Sammi Carter, Slippery Rock University, Music Education – Minor in Theatre

Giovanni Salsa, Hofstra University, Marketing – Minor in Film

Luke Choban, Ohio University, Music Performance, Music Therapy

Trevor Weigand, Florida Institute of Sound and Recording Technology, Digital Film and Video Production

Sarah McKinley, Penn State University, Business – Minor in Theatre

Sam O’Neill, University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Musical Theatre

Lizzie Sylves, Boston Conservatory, Music Performance

GOOD NEWS TRAVELS FAST

Two Seneca Valley students in Dan McKosky’s video production classes brought home awards from Robert Morris’s Digital Media Arts Consortium (DMAC) student video contest earlier this month.

Sophomore Evelyn Vogel won in the News Package category for her video detailing the instructional changes arising from inclement weather this year and senior Ethan Bannon’s original senior project film “Opus” won in the Digital Cinema category.

“Robert Morris has been holding this contest for nearly 25 years, and dozens of schools from Western Pennsylvania participate each year,” stated Seneca Valley Senior High School Video Production and SVTV Adviser Mr. McKosky.

Evelyn Vogel and Ethan Bannon

“Even during a chaotic year, SVTV students were able to produce great work!”
CONGRATULATIONS are in order for the Seneca Valley Boys Track & Field program as the Raiders 4x100 relay team claimed the top spot on the podium as WPIAL CHAMPIONS in a school record time of 42.56! In addition, we congratulate the boys’ program for their 2021 WPIAL Runner-up performance at the WPIAL Team Championships. The Raiders will send a strong contingent to the PIAA Championships at Shippensburg University over Memorial Day weekend. State qualifiers include new school record holder Rylie Smith 400m (57.79) on the girls’ side and multiple event qualifiers on the boy’s side:

Girls PIAA Qualifier
Rylie Smith - 400

Boys PIAA Qualifiers
Wyatt Craver - 4 x100 relay
Aiden Kutchna - 300 Hurdles and 4 x 100 relay
Eli DeWitt - 4 x 800 relay
Matt Laslavic - Triple jump and Javelin
Justin Domenic - 4 x800 relay
Max Marcotte - 4 x 800 relay
Nolan Dvorek - 4 x 100 relay
James Rodrigues - 4 x 800 relay
Danny Fountain - 4 x 100 relay
Luke Simpson - 800 and 4 x 800 relay
Nick Hartman - 4 x 100 relay
Sebastian Wary - 4 x 800 relay
Nick Hemer - High Jump
Tyler Yurich - 100, 4 x 100 relay and Long Jump

Baseball: The Raider baseball team capped off the 2021 season, earning the #7 seed in the WPIAL 6A bracket. In a close contest, Seneca Valley ultimately fell to #2 seed Norwin 4-2, in a game played at West Mifflin H.S. The squad closed out the season with an overall record of 11-9-1, the lone tie coming at PNC Park against Kiski Area. Thank you to head coach Eric Semega and the entire staff for providing a meaningful spring season in 2021.

Softball: In an agonizingly close section race, Raider Softball fell one game shy of qualifying for the 6A WPIAL championships. Overall, Seneca Valley finished 10-7, and had a section record of 4-6. For the season, the team lost four one-run games, showing just how tight the chase was to earn a coveted spot in the WPIAL championships. Thank you to head coach George Trew and the entire staff for providing a meaningful spring season in 2021.

Boys Lacrosse: Seneca Valley earned the #8 seed in the WPIAL 3A Championship bracket and easily defeated #9 seed Canon-McMillan, 12-2, in the opening round of playoffs. The Raiders squared off against top-seeded Shadyside Academy and fell in the quarterfinal round to close out their season. Thank you to head coach David Hall and the entire staff for providing a meaningful spring season in 2021.

Girls Lacrosse: In a season that came down to the final game for playoff positioning, the Raiders lost a tough 12-7 contest to visiting Moon and found themselves on the outside looking in of the WPIAL Championship bracket. After starting the season 2-4, the Raiders finished the final seven games at 4-3 to close out the season 6-7 overall. Thank you to head coach Katie Smolter and the entire staff for providing a meaningful spring season in 2021.

Boys Tennis: Seneca Valley finished the 2021 season with an overall mark of 9-6, narrowly missing the WPIAL Team Championships. Parker Logue and Matt Kraft represented the District at the individual sectional tournament and the doubles tandems of Matt Kraft and Michael deVyver and Ethan Staudt and Ethan Kiggins were team representatives at the doubles section tournament. Thank you to head coach Eric Grove and the entire staff for providing a meaningful spring season in 2021.

Boys Volleyball: The Raiders have earned the #2 seed in the 3A WPIAL Championship bracket on the strength of a 10-2 section mark and 13-2 overall record. Seneca Valley has opened post-season play with straight set wins over Armstrong and Fox Chapel. At the time of this writing, SV is preparing to face Penn Trafford in the WPIAL semifinals.
COLLEGE COMMITMENTS – CLASS OF 2021

More student-athletes continue to make their college commitment official. We congratulate these seniors in achieving their goals of continuing their athletic and academic careers at the next level. Each of you are tremendous representatives of our District and we are very proud of your efforts in the classroom, in competition and in the community.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Major</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie Monahan</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>Carnegie Mellon</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mackenna O’Mara</td>
<td>Rifle</td>
<td>Univ. of Kentucky</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Hunter Swedish</td>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>Washington &amp; Jeff.</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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<td>Brian Whitney</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Chatham University</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
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<td>Gavin Zoelle</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Penn State-DuBois</td>
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ATHLETES OF THE MONTH, APRIL 2021

The Female Athlete of the Month is junior lacrosse player Payton Riddle. Payton led the Raiders to a 6-7 overall record and 4-6 section record. Although SV just missed the playoffs by one section win, Payton had a remarkable junior campaign. In the last seven games while leading the Raiders to a 4-3 record, Payton scored 28 goals averaging four per game. In addition, she had 31 draw controls, 10 positive turnovers, won 9 ground balls, and had 8 interceptions. Payton is a tremendous leader and has a tireless work ethic. For an outstanding month and exceptional junior season, we recognize Payton as the April Athlete of the Month. Congratulations and best of luck as you prepare for your senior season!

The Male Athlete of the Month is senior volleyball setter Evan Howley. Evan has helped guide the Raiders to the #2-seed in the WPIAL 3A playoffs with an overall record of 13-2 and section record of 10-2. In the month of April alone, Evan’s numbers were off the charts with 307 assists, 48 digs, 15 aces and 5 blocks. In addition, the Raiders also finished 3-0, at the Bethel Park Invitational defeating Bethel Park, McDowell and Norwin. In the tournament, Evan finished the day with 45 assists, 11 digs, 2 aces, and 2 blocks. For an outstanding regular season and career at Seneca Valley, we recognize Evan as the April Athlete of the Month. We wish Evan and his teammates the best of luck in the upcoming weeks as they begin their pursuit to win WPIAL and PIAA titles.

WE ARE PLANNING FOR 2021-22 – PHYSICAL, DRUG & CONCUSSION TEST DATES

The athletic department has announced its summer physical, drug testing and baseline concussion testing dates for 2021-22. Please note these plans are subject to change.

REMINDERS for 2021-22:
• All required paperwork for athletic participation in 2021-22 will be available on SV Portal starting June 1, 2021 - no paperwork may be completed prior to June 1, 2021.
• ALL paperwork is due in the athletic office no later than Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021 by 3 p.m. Coaches will not accept paperwork at the first day of tryouts.
• Physicals are first come, first served on dates noted – see schedule below. We do not take reservations in advance. **We encourage families to have their physical completed as soon as possible after June 1, 2021. You may visit your PCP or any Urgent Care Clinic for an athletic physical.**
• The PIAA mandates the CIPPE form as the only permissible form for doctor’s signature.
• All student-athletes must be registered in the SV Portal under “Sports Registration” before competing. Registration begins June 1, 2021.
• Complete information available on the District’s Athletics website under “Participation and TRYOUT information” starting June 1, 2021.
• Concussion baseline testing only needs to be done every other year.
• Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
• Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
• Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
• Physicals limited to 60 total between hours of 8 a.m. – Noon.
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• Complete information available on the District’s Athletics website under “Participation and TRYOUT information” starting June 1, 2021.
• Concussion baseline testing only needs to be done every other year.
• Physicals, Drug Testing and Baseline Concussion Testing Dates – Senior High School
  • Wednesday, July 21, 2021 from 3 – 7 p.m. - Drug testing & Baseline concussion testing offered – NO physicals this session.
  • Thursday, July 22, 2021 from 8 a.m. – Noon - Physicals, drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered this session. **Note:** Physicals limited to 60 total between hours of 8 a.m. – Noon.
• Thursday, July 22, 2021 from 1 – 3 p.m. - Physicals, drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered this session. **Note:** Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
• Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021 from 3 – 7 p.m. - Physicals, drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered this session. **Note:** Physicals limited to 60 total between hours of 3 – 7 p.m.
• Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021 from 8 a.m. – Noon - Drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered – NO physicals this session.
• Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021 from 1 – 3 p.m. - Physicals, drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered this session. **Note:** Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
• Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021 from 1 – 3 p.m. - Physicals, drug testing & baseline concussion testing offered this session. **Note:** Physicals limited to 30 total between hours of 1 – 3 p.m.
GAME ON

The ninth annual Gift of Hope Golf Classic will be held on Thursday, Aug. 5, at Cranberry Highlands Golf Course. Please join us for this fun day of networking and competition – all for a good cause! If you are able to donate a silent auction item or know a business willing to sponsor the event, please contact Annie Mersing at mersingam@svsd.net. For additional information, visit https://www.svsd.net/GolfClassic.

DUCKS DON’T DRIVE DISTRACTED – AND NEITHER SHOULD YOU!

That’s the message the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF), with the help of Ms. Heather Perella and Ms. Rebekah Grinnen’s classes, drove home to students on the eve of prom as a friendly reminder to stay focused on the road. The campaign used funding from SVF and the brainpower of the students to come up with a catchy slogan.

The group placed the ducks on over 450 cars parked in the student spaces at the senior high school.

SPINNING THEIR GEARS

Students on the Seneca Valley Robotics Team, led by Applied Engineering and Technology Teacher Mr. Steve Fortunato, hosted several local business leaders for the first-ever “Raider Robotics Industry Night.”

The robotics lab inside of Seneca Valley Senior High School was brimming with students and intrigued guests from Penna Flame Industries, MSA and Harmony Castings this week for an inside look at the state-of-the-art equipment and hear of the team’s triumphs at robotics competitions.

“Having the opportunity to show off their hard work and accomplishments was important to the team, especially the seniors,” said Mr. Fortunato. “Although the students faced challenges with communication and the building process because of being in the virtual school environment at the beginning of the school year, they managed to bring home medals in three competitions.”

Mr. Fortunato continued, “We felt it was so valuable to share our successes with local businesses because the students are able to make real-life connections and discuss how the tools, machinery and innovative technology they are learning is doing important work at places like Penna Flame Industries (PFI).”

PFI is a surface-hardening company in Zelienople that uses some of the same programs and machinery that students use in the lab. Penna Flame’s Vice President Andrew Orr was thrilled to visit his alma mater and see the strides that have taken place since he graduated in 2005.

“Seneca Valley now has amazing facilities and equipment for young adults to learn about robotics technology and engage with other students. The Haas CNC machine is a great way for them to learn about machining and CAD software like Fusion 360.”

Much of the equipment used in the SV Robotics Lab was funded by the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF), which is the non-profit arm of the district dedicated to providing excellence in education for SV students.

“The Foundation is so proud to have a hand in our students’ success in the robotics world and to see them building relationships with businesses in an ever-growing industry,” said SVF Development Director Annie Mersing.

To learn more about SVF’s mission, support efforts and ways you can help, please visit www.svsd.net/SVF.
‘I LED THE PLEDGE’

The May Seneca Valley School Board Meetings featured Riley Sannes, a third grader from CVE, and Maya Batavia, a third grader from Rowan Elementary, as they led the Board and public in saying “The Pledge of Allegiance.”

Both students were nominated by their building administration to represent their grade, and both did an outstanding job! Mr. Sannes and Miss Batavia were rewarded for their efforts with an “I Led the Pledge” shirt, medal and SV spirit wear.

SCHOOL LUNCH HEROES

School Lunch Hero Day was Friday, May 7. Between preparing healthy food, adhering to strict nutrition standards, navigating student food allergies and offering service with a smile, Seneca Valley cafeteria workers have a lot on their plate! We celebrate all of our hard-working cafeteria staff and meal volunteers who are feeding SV students.

**Please note: Both photos were taken while more than six feet from the photographer - and others - and only briefly removed their masks for the picture. Additionally, please know “The Pledge of Allegiance” was recited while they were socially distanced and, again, wearing a mask.**

SV ALL STAR

The SV All-Star Club is an awards program recently developed by the District to express our gratitude to Seneca Valley classified employees (secretaries, paraprofessionals, maintenance, cafeteria) and bus drivers who are often the unsung heroes of our schools. We intend to recognize a new member of this elite all-star club each month during the school year.

For May, we are pleased to announce that the newest member inducted into the club is Kurt Ford, Maintenance at CVE, who goes above and beyond daily.

Although Mr. Ford has worked in the District for many years, he began working at CVE in October 2019. Upon hearing of Kurt’s transfer from the high school, Seneca Valley Senior High School Principal Bob Ceh reached out to CVE Principal DeeAnn Graham to personally share with her how lucky CVE was to be getting him.

“And boy was he ever right,” exclaimed Mrs. Graham. “Within weeks of Mr. Ford’s arrival, he made our school one of the best in the district! Kurt cleaned out and organized spaces that would have made the faint of heart turn and walk away! Mr. Ceh wanted me to share the thing that always impressed him about Kurt is that he never let the size or difficulty of a project be a reason for not doing it. If the project was good for kids and education, Mr. Ford was always willing to find a solution. And I wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment.”

This past August it was determined that CVE needed to create a new traffic pattern for busing as well as increased outdoor areas for mask breaks. A daunting task to say the least, but Mr. Ford brainstormed several ideas and beyond that, volunteered to make the wooden traffic horses that would block outdoor spaces to keep students safe. Mrs. Graham added, “and because he knows how much I like everything to look pretty, he offered to paint the horses white with little tiny CVE bees on them!”

On another occasion, Mr. Ford offered to prep and install two new sensory pathways in CVE’s hallways over winter break. “In the past, I have had to secure volunteers to help install them on a Saturday, but not with Mr. Ford there,” said Mrs. Graham. “He knows that if a project helps our young students … it gets done!”

Mr. Ford supports not only Mrs. Graham and CVE Assistant Principal Dr. Tina Francis, but he also helps almost 75 teachers and staff each day. He does this with his trademark smile, gentle laugh, soft words of support and understanding and always with quick resolutions to the problem.

“I am so grateful for his exceptional dedication and support of our school community,” said Mrs. Graham.

Congratulations to Mr. Ford!
I LOVE MY TEACHER

For National Teacher Appreciation Day, we asked our students, “what do you love about your teacher?” Check out the video here to see what they said.

Students across the District celebrated their teachers on May 4 by sending in gifts and decorating the sidewalks outside of the schools. Additionally, principals and PTA/PTO groups organized food and special treats for their teachers.

To our SV Teachers, you play such a pivotal role in our children’s lives; by inspiring a lifelong love of learning and discovery and making a difference in their well-being and long-term success. Thank you for all that you do.

STAFF OF SV

Be sure to check out the latest Staff of SV, a light-hearted feature that was created to share with our followers the more human-interest side of our staff that parents and students don’t always get to see.

This month features Ryan Gloyer Middle School Counselor LaVarr Stephens-Howling and how his parents inspired his career. Read more at www.svsd.net/StaffofSV.

THE WOW FACTOR – SOCIAL MEDIA EDITION

Check out our latest feature, “The Wow Factor,” that highlights testimonials from parents, residents and community members.

“We are so grateful for your [SV Nurses] compassion and guidance. Thanks for taking care of us!” -Comment from May 12 post

“Thank you for all you [SV Food Service Staff] do! Not to mention working a Saturday to help provide the hot foods for the SV marching band spaghetti dinner!” -Comment from May 7 post

“Thank you to all the amazing Seneca Valley teachers! My children have been incredibly fortunate to have such inspirational educators. You are appreciated!” -Comment from May 4 post

“A special thank you for your commitment, your dedication, and your care for our students!” -Comment from April 29 post

Thank you, SV Bus Drivers, for getting the students safely to school.” -Comment from April 29 post

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER APPRECIATION DAY

Earlier this month, Seneca Valley held a School Bus Driver Appreciation Day. Students and staff celebrated drivers by delivering gifts, special treats and words of appreciation.

Seneca Valley Transportation Director Jim Pearson added, “The number of people who wished our drivers well deeply touched the hearts of these drivers who work very hard transporting our students to and from school. Some of the bus drivers who have worked in other school districts told me they have never experienced as much support and generosity as they do here.”

Thank you to all of the bus drivers who transport our students to and from school safely every day.

A SALUTE TO TEACHERS

The Pittsburgh Penguins partnered with PPG to honor 100 local teachers with two free tickets to the Penguins vs. Sabres game on May 6. Numerous SV teachers submitted applications and two (that we know of) were selected to attend the game! Nick DeSanzo, a Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC) sixth grader teacher (pictured at top) and Deb McDermott, a Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Gifted Support Teacher, along with her husband Jack McDermott, Seneca Valley Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, were selected for the free game.
ALUMNI Q & A

Ashley Reign, a 2015 Seneca Valley Graduate, is an actress and also a nanny. We asked her to catch us up on what she is doing and how Seneca Valley influenced her life and career.

Q: Catch us up. Tell us what you’re doing today:
A: After graduating from Seneca Valley, I was accepted into the Conservatory of Performing Arts at Point Park University (PPU). Point Park University is in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh, and while I was there, I was blessed to be able to perform in the historic Pittsburgh Playhouse (both old and new). I graduated from PPU in 2019 with a Bachelor’s in Theatre Arts: Performances and Practices with a concentration on Acting for Film and a minor in Business Management. After four years of hard work and pursuing my passions, I was named top of my class and was the Outstanding Student Speaker at my commencement ceremony. Since graduating from college, I have continued my grind to make my dreams become my reality. I have starred in an immersive play called “Khūrākī” (Real/Time Interventions), performed in two feature films: “Little Mouse” by Before I Wake Productions and “Massacre Academy” by Cineworx (premiering this summer), I’ve done a book trailer called “River of My Soul,” a phone app promotional video, and two short films. This summer I will act in my third feature film called “The Order of the White Worm” and an untitled short film. I’m also a nanny! I absolutely love working with kids, and until I can act full time, that’s a job I’m happy to do. My goal within the next year or two is to move to Atlanta, Georgia and further pursue my acting career. I hope to be in the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), performing in movies and on television, and having the gift of entertaining, educating and empowering others.

Q: Please share with us some information about your family.
A: My younger brother graduated from Seneca Valley in 2020. He recently became certified in sound engineering and wants to become a music producer.

Q: What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?
A: People are always surprised to find out that I have a fear of talking on the phone. That’s crazy right?! I’m an actress. I’ve never been nervous about speaking or presenting in front of others; I’ve never been uncomfortable with attention. However, if I have to order my own pizza, I’m shaking in my boots! Ooh! Also, my real last name is Williams. Ashley Reign is my stage name!

Q: How did Seneca Valley help you become the person you are today, both personally and professionally?
A: Seneca Valley helped me become who I am personally by offering a multitude of extracurricular activities and classes. Seneca offers so many things that other schools don’t or unfortunately cannot. There’s so much to explore. I played basketball, I participated in student council, I gave band a try, I did chorus for a while, I was in the Thespian club, and I performed in every play and musical I could get my hands on. That’s one thing that’s so great about SV, you really can explore so much, find what you’re passionate about, and you have so many opportunities to take advantage of as a student. Professionally, SV helped me learn to accept the “nos” of life and let them fuel me to secure my “yes.” Sometimes successes are built on failures, struggles and rejection, but the important takeaway from that is to make your comeback greater than your setback. Persevere. Always.

Q: What do you think makes Seneca Valley such a special place to learn and grow?
A: Seneca Valley is a big school. There’s a vast amount of people to meet, talk to, learn from, collaborate and become friends with. There are teachers who are so passionate about your education, passions and future. There’s a plethora of clubs to join, sports to play, performances to be a part of, and classes to take. I feel that will only continue to become more prevalent as time goes on.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher/coach/SV staff member?
A: Mr. Kysel was my third grade teacher at CVE. He is my favorite teacher to this day. Being in his classroom was a privilege. He was animated, goofy and challenged every single one of his students to reach their full potential. He taught me and my classmates’ things that no one would expect a third grader to know. He taught us about taxes, writing checks, banking, buying a car; we read beyond a third grade level; he taught his students how to play chess; he helped us with fluency, the list just goes on and on. He always had a bunch of games in his classroom and he believed so strongly about learning through play. Before retiring, he would invite his students back to his classroom before they graduated from high school to hear about how they were doing and their goals for the future. A supportive, passionate and wildly intelligent man. Mr. Kysel was the epitome of making learning fun for me, and I draw so many characteristics of how I teach the children I nanny from him.

There are so many teachers at SV, though, that have left their mark on me, nurtured my dreams, and some I still talk to today. Shout out to the late Mr. Watkins, Miss Narcisi, Miss Hugus, Miss Walker, Miss...
Mitnick, the late Mrs. Schoudt, Mr. Friday, and Mr. Hayward. You all have helped, in some way, to make me a better me.

Q: What is one of your favorite memories from your time at Seneca Valley?
A: Other than performing on the Seneca stage, one of my favorite memories is with the late Mr. Watkins. He was my ninth grade Honors English teacher, and I only had him for a semester, as he was terminally ill. His sickness didn’t stop him from showing up to and showing out in class each and every single day. He was the kindest man and built a relationship with each of his students. Mr. Watkins had a passion for theatre, so we bonded over that. One of Mr. Watkins’s last days in class, he pulled me outside of the classroom during activity period. He always wore a pin on his shirt with the theatre signs of Thalia (muse of comedy) and Melpomene (muse of tragedy). He told me that I was a wonderful actress, to stay driven, and I will go far. Then, he gave me the pin. The gesture itself and Mr. Watkins meant and mean the world to me.

Q: If you had one message for teachers or staff, what would it be?
A: You make a difference. Whether you realize it in the moment or not, you make a difference. Your support fuels students, your understanding calms students, your teaching style sticks with and advances students. You may not feel 100% every single day, some days you may feel like you’re at a 72% or a 49% but perform fully at the percent you are at. We appreciate you more than you know.

Q: What do you wish other people knew about Seneca Valley?
A: While the school is big, you’re not just a number. You’ll have friends, teachers, coaches and mentors that will be with you and help you grow and flourish. Seneca Valley is a place where you’ll have your ups and downs, your breakdowns and breakthroughs, your failures and successes. Enjoy the ride, because I promise you, you’ll end up right where you’re supposed to be.
SV FORMS POST-PANDEMIC COMMITTEE

Members to reflect on educational impact of COVID-19

Over the past 14 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on nearly every facet of our daily lives. How we work, shop, socialize and learn are only a few of life's activities that have been changed by the conditions brought forth by the pandemic.

As a school district, we have been forced to rethink nearly every aspect of how we operate within our respective facilities, how we serve our community and how we best support the learning of our students. As we see a post-pandemic world on the horizon, we must now take some time to reflect on our successes, struggles and opportunities to grow and even transform as a school district.

We wanted to make you aware that, over the next three months, a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, and non-teaching professionals within the District will be gathering to discuss the following ideas that have emerged from our experiences during the pandemic:

• What new ideas, strategies, and resources used during this time should be kept as we move into the 2021-22 school year and beyond?
• What new skills were learned during the pandemic that should continue to be emphasized and fostered as we move forward?
• What parts of teaching and learning that were eliminated or de-emphasized during the pandemic should perhaps never return?
• What student needs (i.e. hunger and mental health) were magnified by the pandemic and must continue to be addressed moving into the next school year and beyond?

A high degree of disruption to the way we were accustomed to doing things has allowed us to gain a better understanding of ourselves and our systems while identifying previously unseen opportunities to reevaluate our practices for teaching and learning. We look forward to leveraging our experiences to evolve as a stronger educational system as a whole and a clearer representation of an institution focused on learning for all our students.

Results of the Post-Pandemic Committee’s work this summer will be shared with the Seneca Valley School Board members and stakeholders during a future board meeting.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

By Darlynda Bogle, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Communication

Social Security’s Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides cash payments to children with mental and/or physical disabilities whose families have little or no income and resources. A child must meet all of the following medical requirements to be considered disabled:

• The child must have a medical condition, or a combination of conditions, that result in “marked and severe functional limitations.” This means that the condition(s) must very seriously limit the child’s activities.
• The child’s condition(s) must have been disabling, or be expected to be disabling, for at least 12 months; or the condition(s) must be expected to result in death.

Compassionate Allowances is a list of conditions that, by definition, meet Social Security’s standard for disability benefits. Thousands of children receive benefits because they have a condition on this list at www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm. Children with a condition(s) not on this list can still qualify for SSI.

A child must also meet other eligibility requirements. Since Social Security only pays SSI to disabled people with low income and limited resources, a child, who is not blind, must not be working or earning more than $1,310 a month in 2021. A child who is blind must not be working or earning more than $2,190. Some older teenagers may have part-time jobs or be involved in work programs, which Social Security will count for financial eligibility.

In addition, if an unmarried child under age 18 is living at home, Social Security may consider some of the parents’ income as the child’s income. We make allowances for the parents, and for their other children living in the home, when we consider the parents’ income. You can read more about children’s benefits in our publication, Benefits for Children with Disabilities. Earnings amounts usually change every year.

If you are a parent or know a parent, guardian, caregiver, or representative of someone you think may be eligible, visit our Disability Benefits- Apply for a Child (Under Age 18) web page to learn more and apply. We encourage you to apply if you think your child may be eligible.
MARIJUANA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HELP PROTECT CHILDREN, TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Marijuana is a product of the cannabis plant and its main active chemical is THC. It poses substantial health and safety risks to young people, yet it is the most widely used drug among this population.

The teen and early adult years are when our children are most vulnerable to marijuana’s harmful effects. It can affect how their brains develop, grades, relationships and physical health. Risk for addiction increases too.

National trends have shown generally low rates of youth marijuana use. [1] Still, a recent spike in adolescent and young adult use, coupled with a decade-long decline in thinking about marijuana as risky or harmful [2], is concerning.

Why be concerned?

The strength or potency of THC – the psychoactive ingredient responsible for the “high” associated with marijuana – has increased steadily since the 1960s. Between 1995 and 2018, the average THC concentration in leaf marijuana increased nearly fourfold, from 3.96% to 15.61%. [7] There has also been an increase in ER visits involving marijuana,[8] suggesting that the drug’s current strength is responsible for worse health consequences than decades past. Higher potency is also associated with more severe dependence and a greater likelihood among adolescents of developing psychosis and anxiety disorder.

Ways marijuana is used

Recognizing the different ways young people use marijuana is important to identify use and protect our young people from harm. While smoking remains the most common method of use, many teens believe there are safer or more discreet ways to use marijuana.

Smoking

Marijuana is smoked via a joint (marijuana rolled in paper), a blunt (marijuana in a hollowed out cigar), a bong (a glass or plastic bowl and stem used with water to create smoke), a bubbler (a mini bong), or a hookah pipe. Bongs and pipes are sometimes made out of common objects like soda bottles or cans, and even fruits or vegetables.

Vaping

Increasingly, young people are using smokeless devices to vape liquids or cartridges that contain THC. Vaping does not produce the same telltale smell as smoking, making use easier to conceal. Vaped marijuana also tends to be more potent with higher concentrations of THC.

Dabbing

Dabbing is similar to vaping. A waxy concentrate of marijuana, known as hash oil (or by other names like dabs, wax, butter), is placed on a glass pipe or bong heated with a blowtorch or other device. The heated wax, typically more potent than smoked marijuana, creates a vapor that users then inhale. Dabs can have as much as 90% THC concentration.

Edibles, oils and beverages

Dried cannabis or oil concentrates can be used on their own or baked into many types of food, including snacks and candy products. The added risk associated with edibles is that it is easy to consume more THC than intended. Some sugary seltzer drinks are also spiked with THC – yet another way for youth to consume THC discreetly and in high doses.

Tinctures, capsules and sprays

Often intended for medical use, tinctures are liquids extracted from the cannabis plant using alcohol. They are highly potent and used by placing drops under the tongue for fast absorption. THC can also be swallowed in capsules known as “cannabis caps” or weed pills. They are made by filling medication capsules with marijuana oil, wax or another extract. Liquids, infused with either THC or cannabidiol (CBD), can be discreetly sprayed under the tongue for fast absorption.

For more information on why young people use marijuana, the impact of legalization, steps to prevent use and how to address use visit: Marijuana: What You Need to Know to Help Protect Children, Teens and Young Adults - Partnership to End Addiction (drugfree.org)

Articles and photos provided by drugfree.org

Vaping education for parents, educators

According to Breathe Pennsylvania, vaping devices, also known as vapes, electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, e-vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), are battery operated devices that people use to inhale an aerosol, which typically contains nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals or additives. First generation electronic cigarettes resembled traditional tobacco cigarettes, pipes and cigars. These devices have evolved to the point that they may not resemble first version devices. Second and third generation products often resemble pens, USB drives, and watches. Allegheny Health Network has released a video that is a great educational tool on the dangers of vaping: https://youtu.be/Fn6fzTHWJ1A.
• SV’s Kennywood Picnic Day is Friday, June 25. To buy tickets, visit: kennywood.com/seneca.

• We know these unprecedented times are a struggle for many in our community. If you would like to donate your time and/or resources, please click on and complete the "I Want to Help" survey. If you are in need of assistance, please click and submit the survey form under “I Need Help.”

• Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!

• The 2020 Seneca Valley Annual Report is now available for view at www.senecavalleyar.com.

2021-22 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE STOPS

Planning for the 2021-22 school year is well underway and we wanted to make you aware of a transportation item you will want to keep in mind. The deadline to provide the SV Transportation Department of an alternative bus stop for the 2021-22 school year is Friday, Aug. 6. All alternative stops are deleted at the end of the school year and parents will need to resubmit a request for an alternative stop before the beginning of the following school year. No requests for alternative stops will be taken during the first few weeks of school. Parents missing the Friday, Aug. 6, deadline will be responsible for transportation. We will begin taking requests again on Monday, Sept. 13.

To learn more or make a request, go to www.svsd.net/TransportationRequests.

2021-22 HEALTH UPDATE/REMINDERS

PA School Health Law requires a physical examination and dental examinations for the following grade levels:

• Physical examinations for Kindergarten, Grade 6 and Grade 11
• Dental examinations for Kindergarten, Grade 3 and Grade 7

In addition, PA School Health Law and Seneca Valley School District requires all immunization mandates prior to the first day of school:

• Grade 12 - receive an MCV (meningococcal) booster vaccine, 16 years or older
• Grade 7 - receive 1 dose of MCV (meningococcal) and 1 dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) if 5 years has elapsed since last vaccine

Exemptions to the school laws for immunizations are:

• Medical reasons
• Religious beliefs
• Philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction

If your child is exempt from immunizations, he/she/they may be removed from school during an outbreak. If you have questions, please contact your child’s current school nurse.

SVSD IS PLEASED TO PROVIDE ‘GRAB ‘N GO’ MEALS FOR SUMMER

Free nutritious meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children 18 years old and under at our approved Summer Food Service Sites.

Parents can participate in a once-weekly pick up of meals for their children during the summer. This also includes non-school-age children (more information below).

Meals will be distributed every Thursday beginning June 3, via curbside at 9:30 a.m. Meals may be picked up from the two locations listed below regardless of the school the student attends. Do not exit your vehicle, meals will be brought to you and safely placed in your trunk or back seat as preferred:

Evans City 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Haine 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The last pickup will be Thursday, Aug. 19.

Again, there is no charge for the meals.

To sign up for the Seneca Valley Grab ‘n Go Meals, please select the SVSD Meals sign-up.

For more information, visit www.svsd.net/GrabnGo.
Without Internet access and connected devices, many students in our communities lack the ability to participate in remote learning and complete homework after the school day has ended.

In an effort to identify these gaps, the PA Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) and Penn State Extension have teamed up to conduct a short survey.

The data collected will greatly assist our schools with obtaining local, state, and federal broadband funding to provide additional resources to our students and families.

Thank you in advance for your time in taking this survey!

Scan this special code using a QR reader on your smartphone or visit https://tinyurl.com/broadbandsurveypa to complete the broadband survey.
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Restoration
SUMMER NIGHTS AT LRU

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5 P.M.

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