THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

# Seneca High’s Semi-Annual Newsletter - Spring 2018

## Board of Education Corner - From the School Board President, Ron Frye

Seneca High School is the heart of the community. With the strong ties between the school and the residents it serves, collaborative opportunities exist in many areas. Whether it is providing fundraising events, service, entertainment venues, or use of the building and athletic fields, Seneca High School and our students are positively engaged in the community.

Seneca High School values their relationship with the Village of Seneca Park Board. The Intergovernmental Agreement provides facility and athletic field usage to many youth organizations. Summer Programs sponsored by the Park Board, such as a culinary arts program or guitar lessons, provide a unique opportunity for children to learn new skills. The new community room at the West Campus is utilized frequently by the public for meetings, bridal showers and birthday parties. In addition, Seneca High School also works in conjunction with the feeder grade schools to share facilities for athletic events such as track meets.

As you will learn in this newsletter, many Life Safety and Building Projects are being completed this summer to improve our buildings and grounds. We will strive to continue to serve the community as always, but please pardon the dust as we work to improve the Main Campus, West Campus, and athletic fields.

Since serving on the Board of Education, I have heard countless times that Seneca High School is a building that never sleeps. Activities, whether school related or community based, are ongoing seven days a week. I am proud to say that many great opportunities are available to our students, our youth, and our community.

Best wishes to the Seneca High 2018 graduates!

The current Seneca High School Board of Education Members are:

Ron Frye, President; Sara Olson, Vice President; Rich Hamilton, Secretary; Jason Eltrevoog; Cory Yandell; Joe Johnson; and Mark Victor.

## IRISH IMPROVMENTS - From SHS Superintendent, Dr. James Carlson

When you are blessed with facilities and grounds like ours, proper maintenance and upkeep is an important responsibility. Over the last several years, we have diligently attended to this imperative; however, in the words of the Food Network star Emeril Lagasse, this summer, we kick it up a notch – BAM!

Beginning immediately after the school year ends in the last week in May, our north parking lot will be closed for resurfacing, potential drainage improvements, additional lighting installation, and the conversion of parking lot lights to LED lamps. We anticipate the lot’s closure will run through the summer months.

Another major project will be the replacement of the 1998 addition boilers and some significant corresponding piping improvements. We were very fortunate to survive this past winter when the former four-boiler system was down to one old and decrepit boiler.

Safety is also a theme of this summer’s work. New addressable fire alarm fixtures will be installed and all existing zones will be switched to individually addressable devices. Enhancements will be made to existing windows and doors; a new security door will be installed at the top of the stairway on the north side of the building; and a new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone system will be installed with phones in every classroom. Other work at the Main Campus includes replacing plate glass with safety glass in some areas, installing new door closers, replacing stair treads, repainting all exterior doors, replacing the main office carpeting, and much more.

West Campus will also receive a significant makeover. In recent years, we have seen a tremendous growth in the community’s use of this facility, as our partnership with the Park Board continues to advance. A few months ago, new controls were added to the HVAC system to improve the energy efficiency in heating the plant. Work at West Campus this summer includes a roof replacement, resurfacing the parking lot, rekeying all exterior doors, restoring the stage, and several other smaller projects.

Last summer, we shut the baseball field down to regrade the infield after about forty years of use. This year, the softball field will be shut down until the 2019 high school season begins. Our beautiful field is used nearly year round and is in desperate need of some TLC to ensure it remains high quality. We are also working to improve the practice football field located inside of the track. Finally, we are investigating how to best care for Rat Run Creek on our south border.

All of the projects described above are in addition to our normal summer work. Once again, our housekeepers and maintenance staff, along with the help of several summer student workers, stand ready to clean and maintain our buildings and grounds. These hard working folks are the backbone of the staff and do a wonderful job of caring for our students and staff daily.

Lastly, on a completely different note, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the hard and expert work and the dedication of our retiring staff. Congratulations to Mr. Bonner, Mrs. David, Mrs. Lockridge, Mrs. Ogden, Ms. Raney, and Mr. Stenzel on their retirements. On behalf of the Seneca High School Board of Education, I wish them the very best in their futures and thank them for their years of service to the students of SHS.

Congratulations to all of our 2018 graduating students! Best wishes for great success in your future endeavors.

## IRISH HONORS - From SHS Principal, Marty Voiles

Our National Honor Society members are required to complete twenty service hours to maintain their membership, and this does not count the tutoring they must do in our daily Academic Centers. Members complete some of these additional hours in a school setting, while other hours are done in the community setting.

We placed a tutor in Mrs. Ferguson and Mrs. Maierhofer’s Academic Centers on a daily basis, which added up to over 100 hours of math tutoring per year! In addition to this commitment, NHS members also tutored in Chemistry, Spanish, ESL, START, and other math classes, which added another twenty-five hours of tutoring this past school year. Students spent at least ten additional hours tutoring and helping at CASPER, the grade school after-school program held at the Methodist Church, as well as with Head Start in Ottawa.

In addition, our NHS members provided help at both high school and junior high track meets in the spring. Students also volunteered at other school activities such as the Mom/Son and Daddy/Daughter Dances and the Mazon Reading Night. At each of these activities, students helped anywhere from two to eight hours.

Furthermore, members worked at numerous grade school concession stands, which were ran by parents to help raise money for the schools. Students also volunteered at the SHS Senior Citizens Dinners in the fall and spring, as well as the high school and grade school choral festivals. NHS members also assisted the SHS Guidance Office by giving tours at Freshman Registration.

Not only did our members help with numerous school-related events, but they also volunteered extensively in the surrounding communities. For instance, members worked at food pantries in Seneca, Mazon, Dwight, and Morris. Two students volunteered thirty hours at Ottawa Hospital in their TAGS program, and several worked at three local fundraisers. Many of our NHS members routinely volunteer at their churches, teaching Sunday school and CCD classes, as well as cleaning. NHS also made ten blankets and delivered them to local nursing homes.

NHS members have volunteered with the following organizations: We Care of Grundy County, St. Vincent DePaul, Under His Wings, Feed My Starving Children, Spay it Forward, and United Way. While each member was required to perform twenty service hours, many gave more time than the minimum requirement. Our total service hours added up to close to 400 hours of volunteer time!

Congratulations NHS members and keep up the great work!

### Retiring Teacher and Staff Awards

The following individuals were recognized at the LaSalle County Excellence in Education Banquet on May 3, 2018. Retiring Staff: Fran Ogden, Wes Bonner, Jeff Stenzel, Karen Raney, Julie David, and Carolyn Lockridge. Excellence in Education Awards: Teachers Kelsey Adams (Social Studies) and Kim Foster (Business Education); Support Staff Award: Kathy Phelan (Housekeeping). Faculty and staff provided a breakfast before school on May 22, as well, to honor these individuals. Congratulations to all of our honorees!

## IRISH SHINING- From Assistant Principal, Mike Coughlin

Anyone who has met Sara Cahill would agree that she stood out among her peers. With a contagious smile and a positive attitude, she provided an uplifting momentum to any classroom or hallway of which she was a part. It is no wonder that she was named as the recipient of so many prestigious awards while a student here at Seneca High. Sara will be attending St. Francis University next fall to major in secondary education. She wants to continue her athletic career in track and field at the collegiate level as well. With no doubt, Sara will be successful in all of her future endeavors. Listed below are some of the more recent honors and awards that Sara has received. Congratulations to Sara on her well-deserved accomplishments thus far; she will be missed greatly here in the Land of the Irish.

2018 Illinois State Scholar (Selected by Illinois Student Assistance Commission)

2018 John Ourth Award (Issued by Illinois Principals Association)

2018 DAR Good Citizen Award (Selected by Faculty & Staff)

2018 SHS Student of the Year Award (Selected by SHS Faculty)

2018 Irish Pride Award (Selected by SHS Coaching Staff)

2018 Citizenship Award, provided by Bill Bernadoni (Selected by SHS Committee Members)

### Students of the Year

Congratulations to the following Seneca High School students for being named 2018 Students of the Year:

Role Model of the Year—Lyda Robinson

Student of the Year—Sara Cahill

Most Improved—Cody Altman

Rookie of the Year—Levi Maierhofer

## End of an Era…Good Bye to the I-8 Conference - From Athletic Director, Steve Haines

As we come to the close of the 2017-18 school year, we will be closing an era at SHS, as well. On Friday, May 11, the Seneca High Baseball team played at Herscher, in what was the final regular season contest for the Seneca Fighting Irish in the Interstate 8 Conference. So, I want to look back at our accomplishments during our time in the Interstate-8. Seneca High was a charter member of the I-8 when it formed in 1979, making this year our 39th and final year as a member of the I-8. During those 39 years, Seneca has won 87 varsity I-8 Conference championships and many more at the sophomore and freshmen levels. Let’s also look at how we won those 87 championships. Lady Irish Basketball leads the way with 24 titles, followed by Fighting Irish Basketball with 13 titles, and Lady Irish Track with 12 titles. This past year we increased our I-8 collection by adding Fighting Irish Cross Country and Lady Irish Golf, Track, and Softball to our list of I-8 titles. The Interstate 8 Conference has been very good to Seneca, and we will miss those rivalries, schools, and friendships; however, it is now time to forge rivalries, friendships, and relationships with new schools. We will continue to compete against many of the I-8 schools, but now as non-conference foes. For football and wrestling competition, the Sangamon Valley Conference awaits. For all other sports, our new home will be in the Tri-County Conference. New schools, new opponents, and new opportunities. I look forward to seeing our student-athletes perform and thrive. I-8--you’ve been a good friend, and we thank you for all you have offered our athletes, coaches, and fans of Seneca High School sports!

## IRISH HARMONY - From Band and Choral Instructor, Luke Windham

On Friday, May 4, members of our Concert Band performed at the Illinois SuperState Concert Band Festival at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.  This is the most prestigious and competitive festival for concert band in the state of Illinois.  This year, 100 highly qualified bands submitted recordings to be reviewed for acceptance into the festival, with only 30 bands being accepted.  Our students who have been participating in a before school ensemble we call the Wind Ensemble were one of the accepted bands.  This is a huge honor for our students and for our school and placing a group into the festival has been a career dream of mine. It was an outstanding day and the students and I felt great about our performance.  We received some very positive feedback including an impromptu visit from the director of the Marching Illini.  Our kids left quite an impression on the audience, the judges, and the U of I music staff.

Students who are members of the Wind Ensemble Concert Band are: Abby Zilm, Ali Fischer, A.J. Baker, Anna Roseland, Anna Hamby, Cody Bratcher, Colt Aldrich, Cori Daggett, Dylan Bryant, Emma Claudin, Eve Odum, Faith Thrun, Hallie Roszak, Ian Wilkinson, Jacob Brown, Joey Thomas, Katie Lawrence, Kaylin Naines, Keenan Ellis, Kylie Winsor, Lauren Yost, Monica Groth, Natalie Lawrence, Rebekah (Grace) Alley, Ryann Kenney, Shawnee Gans, Silas Odum, Taylor Vroman, and Trevor Till.

The SHS Choir recently performed songs by Brahms, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. While they were practicing this music, they learned some really interesting German history. Math teacher, Mrs. Mechthild Ferguson, graciously gave up her planning period all year long to coach our choir on their German diction. Mrs. Ferguson is originally from Bonn, Germany and moved to the US twenty years ago. Growing up in Germany, she had a rich background in choral studies, as she was enrolled in chorus classes in grade school, high school, college, and in her church as well. I'd like to share with you our choir’s final performance of a famous German piece about gypsy life, and I want to recognize and thank Mrs. Ferguson for all that she did to make it happen!

## Community Connections

SHS Superintendent, Jim Carlson, would like to give a big THANK YOU to all of the SHS Staff who contributed to the Crotty Park Playground Match Challenge. Including the match, we raised $1,430. Great job to all on supporting a wonderful community cause. The Park District construction crew has made much progress on the new play area already. The Park Board scheduled a dedication ceremony for May 27th.

In February the CIA (Conservation In Action) got together on four afternoons and built bird boxes for native birds. Bird houses were built to specific parameters for different bird species that are experiencing a decline in Illinois.  The bird houses will be placed along the I&M Canal in coordination with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.  We called call our project "extreme nest makeover" The bird species that our crew specifically built for were Barn Owls, Fly Catchers, Blue Birds, and Wood Ducks. We hope the community will enjoy spotting the birds in their new “homes” as they walk or bike along the I&M pathways. ~ Terry Maxwell, Science Teacher CIA Advisor.

FCCLA (Family Career and Community Leaders of America) has taken a new focus the past couple years by putting more effort into community outreach. FCCLA sponsor, Erica Read, announced that the group took part in a service project almost every month from September through May. Their main goal was to help others! Starting in September, FCCLA sold Irish Strong Hoodies to help raise money for SHS preschool student, Justin Roseland, with his fight against childhood cancer. In October, FCCLA took part in Volley for a Cure to help raise hundreds of dollars for breast cancer awareness. In November, many of the FCCLA members, along with NHS members, volunteered at Milton Pope Grade School concession stands. December is a busy month, but Seneca Grade School asked us to bake dozens of cutout cookies for the SGS Family Christmas Party, and we were happy to help! In January, FFCLA members submitted positive and inspiring messages to students throughout the school. The month of February started with our 2nd Annual Mom/Son Dance with over 200 in attendance! This evening included the Magic Matt Show, which was a huge hit. A portion of this event’s registration fee went to the Justin Roseland Cancer Fund, who was our guest of honor. MVK Family Reading Night was also a big hit in February. In March, some of the FCCLA students volunteered their Friday night to help at the Seneca Grade School Gala PSO Fundraiser. In April, we baked items again, but this time it was to help out Seneca Pride Cheer & Football teams. FCCLA also created and ran games for the Seneca Grade School Family Reading Night this month as well. The final events in the month of May found FCCLA working with Milton Pope Grade School to help organize the flowers from their spring fundraiser. Lastly, we ended the year by hosting our most popular event, the 3rd Annual Daddy/Daughter Dance. We hosted over 250 fathers and daughters this year. FCCLA could not be part of any of these community activities if it were not for the student members volunteering their time. We are grateful that we were able to reach our goal of helping others in the community this year.

## Showing Some Irish Pride For Our Military Students

Seneca High has seven graduates from the Class of 2018 who have made the decision to serve our country as members of the United States Armed Forces. Three students have already committed to the US Marine Corps; two more are planning on joining the US Air Force; one student is currently enlisted in the Illinois National Guard; and one more student is joining the US Army. These seven young men will be stepping out of high school and stepping into uniform to begin their rigorous training to become future protectors of our freedoms. A cake reception was held in the SHS Commons on the morning of May 10, 2018 to honor them. We appreciate their dedication and bravery.

Colt Aldrich chose to join the Illinois Army National Guard at an early age. He began his military training in May of 2017 at the age of seventeen. Colt spent the hot summer months enduring intense physical and weapons training to graduate in August as a Private. On May 5, 2018, Colt was promoted to Private First Class with the Guard, and he will begin his Advanced Individual Training (AIT) this June. The National Guard is actually one of the earliest organized armed forces for the United States. One of the motivations for Colt to join the IL National Guard was to get assistance with college funding, as he plans to attend college during his service commitment. When asked if any other members of his family have served, Colt stated that his grandfather was in the Army during the Vietnam era. Colt is the son of Patricia Aldrich of Mazon and Scott Aldrich of Verona.

Daniel Imes will be heading out West in August of 2018 to begin a thirteen-week boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California. US Marine recruits have to face one of the most challenging military boot camps of all the Forces, which enables them to be some of the toughest defenders of our nation. Daniel says, “I have always been interested in joining the military ever since I was a kid.” Now that “kid” is a young man who will be serving an eight-year commitment with the Marine Corps. When asked about his plans he said: “I am committed to four years active duty then four years reserve, but I do not plan on making a career out of it. I think of this commitment as a solid base to have in finding a career. College might be an option after my active duty, but a lot will be different then. I can't speak for my future self.” After boot camp, he will be going on to complete his Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) as a Communication Systems Marine. Daniel is the son of Laura & Kathy (step-mom) Haralson of Seneca and Kurt & Sunny (step-mom) Imes of Versailles, Indiana.

Austin Richardson decided that he wanted to join the US Army so that he can “fight” and become an enlisted soldier. Austin will begin his ten-week Basic Combat Training (BCT) in July of 2018 at Fort Leonard Wood in St. Robert, Missouri. After BCT graduation as a Private, he will move on to his Advanced Individual Training (AIT) where he will learn further skills to perform his job in the Army. This specialized training will provide him with even more opportunities for a career outside of military life someday if he so chooses. Austin said that he wants to make a career of being an Army soldier. He has relatives who have served in the Navy, which may have inspired him to join the military. Austin is the son of April Gilbertson of Verona and Todd Richardson of Ottawa.

### Irish Pride Continued…

Cody Altman enlisted in the US Marine Corps to “have the chance to travel and make a brotherhood that can’t be broken.” He is leaving in October of 2018 for Boot Camp to the MCRD in San Diego, California. Cody is thinking of making a career of being a Marine, and he added “but that depends on how I like it. If I don’t really think it’s something I want to continue, I will probably give college a try.” He says he does not know of any

family members who are in or have served in the military, so he might be the first one. Cody’s plan for continuing on with the Marine Corps will involve more specialized training to fulfill his MOS duty in the Infantry Training Battalion. Cody is the son of Michelle & Jerry Altman of Verona.

Dominik Sticha has elected to serve in the US Air Force when he graduates from SHS. Dominik’s motivation for joining is because he wants to challenge himself. Becoming an Airman of the United States Air Force is important to Dominik, and he is willing to do what it takes to complete his mission. Dominik should be starting USAF Basic Military Training (BMT) at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas sometime in June or early July of 2018. After Basic, he hopes to move into Aviation Maintenance to fulfill his job duty or Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). When asked if he wanted to make a career of being in the military, Dominik replied, “I would like to put in my time for the contract I have signed and attend college classes while doing so. If I like what I am doing while in service, I may decide to continue…if not, I will get out.” Dominick is the son of Jessica & Matt Sticha of Seneca.

Logan Vandenberg says he has “always wanted to be a Marine,” and it is something he “just feels [he] needs to do.” Logan is set to leave for his Marine Recruit Boot Camp this July, which takes place in San Diego, California. Logan, along with his classmates Daniel and Cody, have been preparing all year long to be ready for the demands of Marine Boot Camp by attending physical training (PT) drills at their recruiting office in Morris. It is important for all US Marine recruits to be in top physical and mental shape before arriving aboard MCRD, San Diego. At the end of the intense three-month boot camp, Marines have to face what is known as the “Crucible”. Logan’s sister and brother-in-law are both currently serving in the US Navy, and his brother-in-law is currently deployed in Okinawa, Japan. Logan is the son of Tanicka & Ross Vandenberg.

Hunter Howe has plans to enlist in the US Air Force this summer. When asked what his motivation for wanting to join the military, Hunter stated: “I do not think college is right for me.” Hunter has an older brother and cousin who are both starting the Airman Basic Military Training (BMT) this summer. It was an influence that has seemed to rub off on Hunter, who will most likely start his seven-week basic training next fall. He can utilize the summer months to get ready for the strict physical fitness standards that all Air Recruits must pass to get through BMT and qualify for graduation. Hunter thinks he may want to stay in the Air Force as a career, but if he decides not to, he will most likely attend college. Hunter is son of Erin & Randy Howe of Seneca.

End of this newsletter.