

January 2019
Volume 11
Issue 5

Principal's Newsletter

Somers High School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Winter has arrived. Well at least from a temperature standpoint. Where is the snow? I am not advocating for copious amounts of shoveling, but we do live in New England. I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and take the time to look at the information and videos regarding e-cigarettes/Vaping/Jouling. It is a nationwide epidemic and we are doing our best to help educate students, parents, and the Somers community.

Midterm exams will take place from **Tuesday, January 22 - Friday, January 25th**. The exam schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, January 22 - Period 1 and Period 2
Wednesday, January 23 - Period 3 and Period 4
Thursday, January 24 - Period 5 and Period 6
Friday, January 25 - Period 7 and Period 8

The first exam will run from 7:40 - 9:40 and the second exam will run from 9:55-11:55. Students must arrive on time to each exam.

Students are not required to be in school if they are not scheduled to take an exam, however, students who are at school during their free periods must report to the cafeteria.

Morning bus pick up will take place at regularly scheduled times. Return bus transportation will only be available upon exam dismissal at 11:55 a.m.

I always maintain an open-door policy and am here to assist you. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any concerns. I always look forward to working with each of you and to help make our school the best it can possibly be.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Cotzin

Almost, Maine

On November 30th and December 1st our Drama program presented Almost, Maine. A great play that has received many accolades from staff and parents. We are very proud of all those that were involved.

Cast:

Ian Arnone, Jacob Avery, Madi Baer, Ben Bolduc, Emily Brayton, Patrick Connors, Jack Denehey, Aidan Devine-Baillargeon, Kaya Donah, Gwen Guldix, Alex Lippe, Ciara Logan, Michaela Scully, Sarah Smithline, Sheridan Speight, Nancy Strever

Student Directors:

Christian Chlebowski, Amari O'Connor, Rachel Ranelli, Siobhan Scully, Nancy Strever

Stage Managers:

Samantha Barile, Fiona Cheyney, Emma Felix

Various Tech Crew:

Miranda Barresi, Jade Brenton, Bryan Bushey, Stephanie Butler, Wula Cham, Jared Cranna, Sarah Cranna, Dana Gall, Alexa Gallerani, Megan Gaskell, Emma Koseski, Jocelyne Lallier, Trevor Parks, Jenna Pfeifer, Madeline Mancuso, Nick Mancuso, Vinnie Mazza, Alyssa Milliken, Rachel Ranelli, Serena Robidoux, James Uyar, Sarah Uyar, Patricia Vivilecchia

We now look forward to the next production.

Social Studies News

The Social Studies Department was fortunate to recently have two guest speakers visit our classrooms. Mrs. Angelica's sophomore US History/Civics class welcomed Mr. Bob Schmidt who spoke about voter registration and voter turnout on both the local and national level. He provided the students with numerous resources that they could access at a later date. In an effort to further the student's understanding of civic issues of interest, Mr. Macaluso invited Mr. Czapla to his classroom to participate in a class discussion regarding school policies that directly effect student life. We would like to thank both Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Czapla for their willingness to share their time and expertise. Finally, Mr. Goduti's AP US History students are looking forward to their annual trip to Washington D.C. that will be occurring at the end of March.

Food for Thought

On November 2nd The Food Service & Management students wrapped up their week long preparation for the Somers Congregational Church Turkey Supper. The students were instructed on how to prepare 25 raw turkeys for roasting. They used their knife skills to slice the cooked birds; and learned which parts of a turkey are considered white and dark meat. Students prepared approximately 8 cases of butternut squash by learning to peel, dice, steam and mash it. Meanwhile other students learned how a stock is made and the purpose of a roux for thickening the 13 gallons of turkey gravy. The Somers Congregational Church was grateful for the hard work the students put forth again. The Somers High School Food Service & Management classes were an essential part in making the Somers Congregational Church's annual Turkey Supper in 2018 a success.



Career Corner

Thinking about a future career can be exciting, but also daunting. Opportunities for career exploration—assessments, job shadows, career treks, guest speaker forums, after school programs, career exploration independent study courses—give high school students broader exposure to the working world they one day will enter. Career exposure opportunities help students “connect the dots” between school, post-secondary choices and their career aspirations. With a better understanding of the realities of the working world, and with self-reflection, young people can more easily envision how they may fit in that world and how to begin preparing for it.

This year, Somers students have explored careers in education, law enforcement, physical therapy, athletic training, medicine, actuarial science, accounting, business and finance, manufacturing, engineering, robotics, architecture, construction management, and more. For more information please contact Meg Duffy, Career Specialist in the Counseling & Career Center at meg.duffy@somers.k12.ct.us. You can also visit <https://sites.google.com/a/somers.k12.ct.us/somers-high-school-career-awareness-and-preparation-programs/>.



Manufacturing Day at Dymotek Corporation in Ellington, CT – exploring robotics, engineering and manufacturing careers.



Students participate in the Actuarial & Analytics Day at Travelers. (Left)

Alumni Karisa Welch, (class of 2012)

returns to SHS to explain the training required to become a Physician Assistant. (Right)



Learning about the field of business at Voya Financial. (Left)

Exploring a career as a teacher at Somers Elementary School. (Right)



SHS Music Department Update

On December 20th and 21st the Somers High School Honors Choir and select members of the Band went caroling throughout assisted living homes and the school district. The homes they visited included the Suffield House and Woodcrest, with a stop at the Somers Town Hall. The students enjoyed spending their day bringing joy to the elderly and spreading the holiday spirit. Additionally, on the 21st, the day before winter break, the Honors Choir spent the day caroling at the library, Central Office, and the elementary, middle, and high schools.



Performing at Suffield House

The Music Department also participated in the holiday donation program through the Network Against Domestic Abuse. SHS/MBA Music Department students raised over \$1,500 and sponsored 3 kids. Collectively, we made a monetary donation, bought numerous individual gifts and purchased three gift certificates for bicycles at a bike shop. We would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all parents, students and community members who contributed to this program.

Our annual Winter Concert is rapidly approaching, and students are looking forward to it! Some of the musical selections include The Polar Express, Straight No Chaser's 12 Days of Christmas, and our 15th annual "Hallelujah Chorus." We are hoping to see many audience members join us onstage to sing!

Winter Concert Date: January 15th, 7p.m. (SNOW date 1/17/19)



Performing at Town Hall

Congratulations to the four SHS musicians who made it to the Eastern Region Festival! Giovanna Gioscia, Sarah Uyar, Madilyn Baer, Kaitlyn Savage, Edwin Genece, and Patrick Connors earned the chance to perform onstage at the Jorgensen Auditorium at UCONN on January 5th. They will now be able to move on to the All State Auditions, to be held on February 2nd. We wish them the best of luck with the next round of auditions!

The SHS Music and Drama Departments are hosting a trip to see Dear Evan Hansen on Broadway on April 17th! In addition to seeing the show, students will be participating in a Stage Combat Workshop, meeting professional Broadway actors, and eating lunch at a fancy restaurant. Final payments for this trip are due by January 10th. Parents can access trip payment information through the SomersMusicPatrons.org website.

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SHS DRAMA CLUB



Rehearsals are underway for *The Drowsy Chaperone: a musical within a comedy* for our March production! The Drama Club has been rehearsing everyday after school with much laughter and sweat! This recently written comedy reflects on a 1928 musical so it's a great combination of new jokes on a nostalgic old school musical.

We have many opportunities for volunteering from set building to costume organizing. We are extremely grateful for the parent volunteers that are creating and planning props and the costumes for each character.

Any further questions can be directed to marika.kraus@somers.k12.ct.us

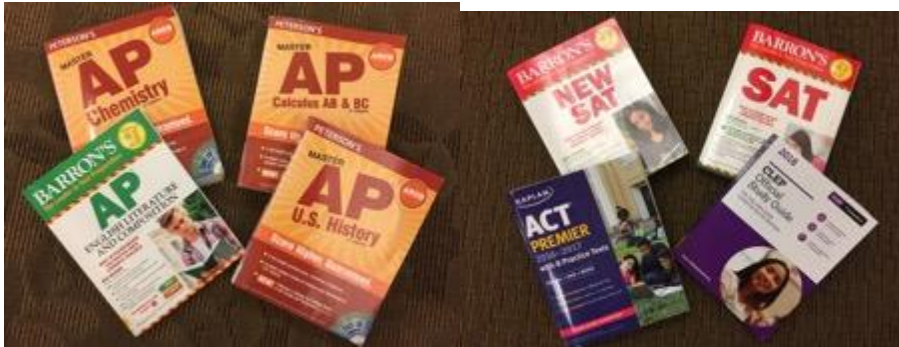
Physics Anyone?



On October 13, 2018, AJ, Delaney, Trevor, and Aidan, team Mind/Matter (Mind Over Matter), participated in the Yale Physics Olympics located at Yale University. The team participated in five physics events, including using Hot Wheels™ tracks and paper to keep a marble rolling for the longest amount of time, finding the airflow of a fan, determining properties of a rubber band, and the very challenging Fermi Quiz. The t-shirts the team wore were created by Delani. Fifty teams in total from high schools around the state participated at the Physic Olympics and the students did very well!

AP and SAT Study Guides Available

It may seem like spring will never arrive, but it will be here before you know it! For students looking to get a head start on reviewing for the SAT's or advanced placement exams, the Somers Public Library has materials that can help you prepare. In addition to the study guides available in the Reference section, there are several eBooks that can be downloaded through Hoopla. Interested in a career in law enforcement? There are resources that can help you prepare for those exams as well. If you are interested in learning more, please see Ms. Stoltz in the LMC or Mrs. Becker at the public library.





SHS Health and Wellness

Comprehensive Vaping Plan

School Actions: Increase staff vigilance in the classroom and the restrooms. Periodically view camera footage in order to spot trends or track suspicious activity. Utilize SRO's to help educate students via assemblies, classroom discussions and/or after school activities. Student leadership - Empowerment, pledge. Students pledge to not vape. Not in my bathroom campaign. Encourage student usage of Anonymous Alerts in order to assist staff in identifying student's vaping/smoking.

- Add restorative piece to consequences - ISS students meet with the nurse, social worker, write paper, read articles, meet with parents for any student caught vaping or smoking or possessing or using any other illicit substances.

Education: Ensure health curriculum meets the needs to cover vaping topics in depth. Talk to local vendors (police enforcement) and educate them accordingly. Should begin in grade 5. Use homeroom/advisory to further discuss the topic.

Athletics:

1. Include the appropriate training in preseason coaches meetings.
2. Update the coach's manual with the appropriate wording and context of coach's role and responsibilities in educating their athletes.
3. Confirm the penalties of vaping as part of the school's drug/alcohol policy for athletes/sports.
4. Update team rules to incorporate philosophy and policies.
5. Conduct seasonal team/athlete's preseason meeting with all coaches in an educational program.
6. Conduct a mid-season captain's meeting.

Student Assemblies: On January 4, 2019 there was a student assembly about vaping. 9th and 10th grades were combined. 11th and 12th grades were combined. After assemblies students moved into advisories where teachers facilitated discussions with small groups to further address the issue.

Another student assembly is being planned for Mid-March. A speaker from Yale University's "Youth Tobacco Research Program." She has done this across Connecticut and does not charge for the program.

Teachers will be given necessary materials to effectively run small groups.
Assemblies will continue as needed.

Parent Forums: One was held in November. A follow up parent forum will be held in the spring of 2019.

Faculty Meetings: February meeting will be utilized to continue to educate staff on the vaping topic.

Newsletter: Will use the newsletter to inform parents about Vaping and its effects via selected articles from current publications.

Speakers: Have already selected a speaker for May that will address the topic, as well as other issues that are impacting students. (See assemblies)

Articles of Interest

- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids: <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>
 - The Truth Initiative, Inspiring Tobacco-Free Lives: <https://truthinitiative.org/news/what-is-juul>
 - The Centers for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm
 - The United States Surgeon General, Know the Risks, Talking with your Teen about E-cigarettes: A Tip Sheet for Parents: <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>
 - <http://www.scholastic.com/youthvapingrisks/pdfs/2018-5231-LettertoEducators-Signed.pdf>
 - http://www.scholastic.com/youthvapingrisks/pdfs/NYTS_Infographic_111218.pdf
- *If link(s) do not work, please copy and paste the article into your browser.*

SHS Sports

Both the boy's and girl's basketball teams are off to good starts, with the girl's team starting the season by winning (7) games of their first (9) games and the boy's team winning (6) of their first (8) games. The wrestling team has played in (3) league matches and competed in (4) tournaments, as they prepare to compete at Lyman Memorial this weekend. The next home meet is scheduled for January 15th vs. East Windsor, followed by senior night on January 29th before the Rockville match. Tri-Town Hockey has a record of 4-4 as they near the half-way point of their regular season. We have (2) boys and (2) girls competing with the Ellington indoor track team, where Kylie Raymond and Olivia Suter have already qualified for the NCCC and state championship meets. Unified sports will begin in February as the schedule is being finalized. For more information and weekly updates and season schedules, please refer to the Somers High School athletics tab on the district website.

Important Dates for January

1/15 SHS Winter Concert @ 7 pm

1/21 No School - M.L. King Jr's Day

1/25 Quarter 2/Semester 1 Ends

1/28 Quarter 3/Semester 2 Begins