



# The Irish Highlighter

Volume 6: Issue 1

## Seneca High School

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### COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016

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# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



## Board of Education Corner



**2015-16** was a successful year in the Land of the Irish. The Board of Education set measurable financial and academic goals. I am pleased to announce we met and exceeded these goals. In addition, the expanded summer school offered students the chance to take classes to free up their schedules during the school year.

### 2015-16 Measurable Goals Outcome

**Goal:** 80% of students enrolled in dual credit and/or certifications will succeed in obtaining college credit and/or certification.

**Outcome:** 97% obtained credit and/or certification.

**Goal:** 75% of SHS students will participate in at least one co-curricular activity each year.

**Outcome:** 85.4% of students participated.

**Goal:** Students enrolling in Honors, Accelerated Math courses, Dual Credit/College classes, or AP courses will exceed 25%.

**Outcome:** 41% of our students are currently enrolled in one or more Advanced Offerings.

**Goal:** The number of B's and A's earned in all classes are measured by semester report cards will meet or exceed 75%.

**Outcome:** 80.8% of students earned B's and A's.

**Goal:** Increase the fund balances by 5% - 8% each year during FY16 through FY20.

**Outcome:** FY16 fund balance increased by 15.88%.

### 2015-16 End of the Year Stats

In the 2nd Semester, student enrollment averaged 428 students with an average daily attendance of 408. At the end of the 4th quarter, **90.5%** of all grades issued were A's, B's and C's.

In the 2015-16 school year, discipline referrals were down by **25.4%** from the previous school year. Tardy for School and unexcused/skipping were the top 2 minor offenses.

### 2016 Summer School Recap

**82 credits** were earned for the first semester of summer school. **49 credits** were earned for the second semester of summer school.

### 2016-17 New Classes

Dual Credit Speech, Honors Chemistry II, Welding, and Honors English II have been added to the course offerings for the 2016-17 school year. Students who successfully complete the welding class may earn college credits with IVCC.

As the first semester comes to a close, I am happy to report that we are off to a successful 2016-17 school year!

*On behalf of the Board of Education,  
I wish you a very happy holiday season.*

Ron Frye,  
SHS Board President



#### SHS Board of Education

Seated: President Ron Frye, Vice-President Sara Olson

Standing Left to Right: Ryan Johnson, Rich Hamilton,  
Mark Victor, and Joseph Johnson

Missing from photo: Board member Gerry Baker



“You need an attitude of service. You're not just serving yourself. You help others to grow up and you grow with them.” - David Green, owner of Hobby Lobby stores



## A Message from SHS Superintendent, Dr. James Carlson



2016 SHS Illinois State Scholars

Make no mistake, schools are about kids and Seneca High School is full of good ones. Take, for instance, this year's Illinois State Scholars. Eleven members of the senior class have earned the honor of Illinois State Scholar. They include Sean Baker, Eva Bruno, Madison Carr, Carina Collet, Eden Dennis, Anna Doloski, Jamie Goslin, Ashley Hatz, Abigail Huffman, Torie Knibbs, and Emily Woods. They represent a whopping 12% of this year's graduating class. Even more impressive is that this group of

students is not only smart but also represents a quality of character and commitment to community that rivals and surpasses their academic prowess.



Strong academics embedded within a context of service to one's community is what we strive for at Seneca High School and while the Illinois State Scholars personify the marriage of academics and service, they are but a small sampling of what our students do for our community. The FFA's Veteran's Day program illustrates this point well. Now in its fourth year, the program provides an opportunity for our students to pay tribute to so many wonderful area veterans. Complete with music, tributes, and certainly the famous FFA pork chops, SHS students celebrate those who sacrificed so much for our freedom.

Around Halloween, the Seneca High Schools Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) organized an event called "Trick or Soup" in which SHS FCA members dressed up in old SHS football jerseys and went door to door collecting non-perishable items for the local Food Pantry. All totaled, over 1,800 pounds of non-perishable food items were collected for the Seneca Food Pantry.

Each year, as a part of our Class Games during Homecoming, we have a friendly competition we call Penny Wars. Our goal this year was to raise \$1,000. Impressively, we surpassed the goal by collecting \$1,437.09. Funds were divided among the MVK Christmas Fund, Seneca Food Pantry, Talia Freund, and DCFS Christmas gifts.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, seventeen of our Conservation in Action club members helped move 22 tons of rock along two newly constructed walkways that will connect to docks at the Seneca boat landing. They did this under the supervision of science teacher, Mr. Terry Maxwell, and Randy Timmons from the IDNR. The project took about three hours to complete. All the rock was moved by hand, shovel, wheelbarrow, and dolly. The purpose of the rip rap is to prevent erosion along the shoreline during high water stage of the river. Without the rip rap, the newly poured concrete walkways would be undercut by the current. Due to the soft shoreline, this rock had to be hand laid. The rocks varied from softball size, to a little bit bigger than basketball size.

As you can see from the examples above, our students display a profound sense of service to their community. They give back. They prove that curriculum extends beyond the walls of the school. I am very proud of the students at Seneca High School. They represent themselves, their families, and their communities well.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Education, Administration, Faculty, and Staff of Seneca High School, I wish you and your family a blessed and safe holiday season.





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

## SHS Educational Program



Seneca High School offers a comprehensive educational program. In addition to a rigorous and relevant standard curriculum, the district provides students opportunities in art, music, career and technical education, and advanced coursework, including Honors, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and College Credit.

### Course Offerings

#### Standard Education



##### Arts

Art I, II, III & IV  
Band  
Chorus  
Guitar  
Music Appreciation  
Photography

##### Business

Accounting I, II & III  
Economics  
Webpage/Media I & II  
Business Concepts  
S.T.E.P.

##### English Courses

American Humanities  
English I, II, III & IV  
Creative Writing  
Drama  
Public Speaking  
The Holocaust

##### Foreign Language

Spanish I, II, III & IV



#### Career and Technical Education

##### Agriculture

Intro to Agriculture  
Agricultural Construction  
Agricultural Science  
Agricultural Mechanics  
Intro to Horticulture  
Agribusiness Management  
Welding I & II

##### Family & Consumer Sciences

Intro to FACS  
Early Childhood Education I & II  
Early Childhood Ed. Admin.  
Foods/Nutrition

##### Health and Safety

Health Education  
Drivers Education

##### Physical Education

Physical Education  
Athletic Physical Education

##### Mathematics

Algebra I, II & III  
Geometry  
Pre Calc/Trig  
Calculus

##### Science

Intro to Lab Science  
Applied Biology  
Biology I  
Environmental Problems  
Anatomy/Physiology  
Chemistry I & II  
Physics

##### Social Studies

American Government/Civics  
Current Issues  
U.S. History  
World Studies

##### Health Occupations

Health Occupations  
Nurse Assistant  
Allied Health

##### Industrial Arts

Architectural Drafting  
Engineering Graphics  
Intro to Tech  
Wood Production I, II & III  
Video Production I & II

##### Auto Mechanics

Intro to Auto  
Vocational Auto I, II, & III

### Advanced Offerings

#### Advanced Placement

Literature and Composition  
U.S. History

#### Dual Credit

Athletic Physical Education  
Calculus  
College Algebra  
Trigonometry  
Psychology  
Speech  
US History

#### Honors

English I & II  
Chemistry I & II

#### College Courses

Political Science  
Speech



### Co-Curricular Activities

Art Club	Scholastic Bowl
Auto Club	Science Club
Baseball	Soccer
Basketball	Softball
Bass Fishing	Spanish Club
Cheerleading	Special Olympics
Cross Country	Speech
Dance Team	Spring Musical
Drama Club	Student Ambassadors
FCCLA (Family Community Career Leaders of America)	Student Council
Fall Play	Swimming
FFA	Track and Field
Football	TRUST (Teens Resisting Unhealthy Social Temptations)
Golf	TSA (Technology Student Association)
GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance)	Volleyball
HOSA (Future Health Professionals)	Wrestling
Intramurals	WYSE (Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering)
Math Contest	Yearbook
National Honor Society	

### Additional Offerings

#### Summer School

Algebra I  
American Government  
Drivers Education  
Economics  
Public Speaking

#### World Studies

Student Services  
Academic Support Centers  
School Psychologist  
START

#### Special Education

Courses and related services are selected and adapted to meet each student's individual needs, per their Individualized Education Programs.

What makes a child gifted and talented may not always be good grades in school, but a different way of looking at the world and learning. ~ Chuck Grassley



## Semester Highlights from SHS Principal, Marty Voiles

### New State Assessment

The Illinois State Board of Education has announced that it will provide the College Board's SAT exam, including a writing component, at no cost to all public high school juniors during the 2016-2017 school year. The SAT will replace the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment as the high school accountability exam in Illinois. For more information, see ISBE announcement: <http://www.isbe.net/news/2016/july11.htm>

**All Seneca High School Juniors will take the SAT exam on Wednesday, April 5, 2017.**

The new SAT focuses on the skills and knowledge that colleges want most. It covers vocabulary and math that are widely used in college and career and it features an essay to assess students' ability to write coherently and analytically. The College Board has teamed up with Khan Academy to provide world class, personalized, online practice tools for students free of charge. This is a great way for students to practice their skills for success on the test and beyond high school. Students can use Khan Academy at their own pace, anytime, anywhere.

For more information go to: <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>

During the 2017-2018 school year, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who will enroll at Seneca High School the following fall, plus Seneca High School freshmen and sophomores, will take respective SAT assessments. This battery of exams will prepare all students for state standardized testing during their junior year.

For more information, please visit the College Board website/resources using the links below, or contact SHS guidance staff at (815) 357-5000, extension 126.

College Board Parents Overview: <http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/>

PSAT Homepage: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

SAT Homepage: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

Big Future (College & Career): <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

New SAT Info: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/>

SAT vs. ACT: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/comparing-new-sat-act.pdf>



### New Courses Offered at SHS for 2017-2018

Seneca Township High School continues making several curriculum adjustments in an attempt to prepare all students to become college and career ready following high school graduation. Below is a list of new courses recommended by staff and approved by the Board of Education for implementation beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.

**Graphic Design** – is a course designed to foster the ability to use computer technology and art to communicate ideas in our modern society. Students will learn the basics of the computer programs Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. They will use these programs to complete small projects such as: logo design, advertisements, package design and .gif animation, and more.

**AP Language and Composition** - is a college-level course designed for juniors. The course is driven by the reading and analysis of various nonfiction texts, including speeches, advertisements, essays, researched reports, and narratives. The topics of these nonfiction pieces promote intellectual thinking and civic engagement. The reading and writing students complete in the course will deepen their understanding of how written language rhetorically functions. At the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to take the AP exam to earn college English credit.

**Broadcast Journalism** – Broadcast Journalism is a course to introduce students to the process of delivering a successful television news broadcast. Students will learn the basics of journalism, including broadcast style writing and the processes of production. Students will be trained in digital video camera techniques, including the basics of shooting and editing video stories. Students will use these skills to produce and anchor a weekly announcement/news program for Seneca High School, while also having opportunities to research, write, and produce feature stories.

**Vocational Math** – this one-year course is designed to cover mathematics topics and hands on experience in a variety of vocational fields such as construction and landscaping. Students will use basic mathematics up to trigonometric applications.

**Exploration of American Music Appreciation (JJC Dual Credit)** – this is a survey course dealing with important people and trends in the evolution and development of American musical culture from colonial times to the present.



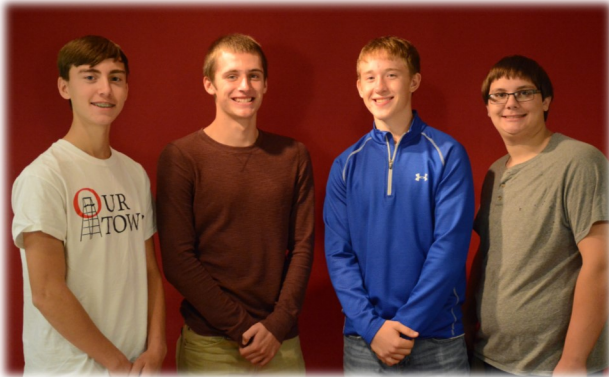


# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



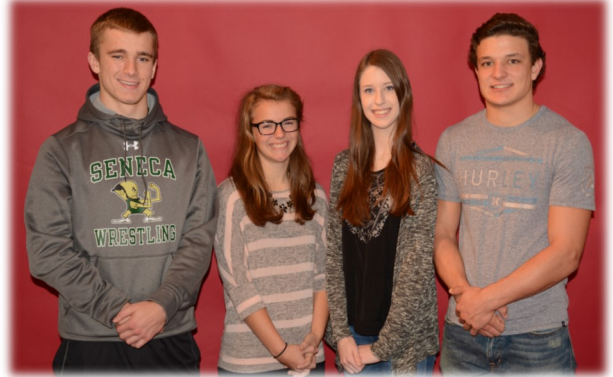
## Students of the Month

### AUGUST 2016



Trevor Till, Rookie of the Month  
 Thomas Bartkus, Role Model of the Month  
 Sean Baker, Student of the Month  
 Daniel Burba, Most Improved Student of the Month

### OCTOBER 2016



Mason Dooley, Most Improved Student of the Month  
 Monica Groth, Rookie of the Month  
 Madison Carr, Student of the Month  
 Hunter Simon, Role Model of the Month

### SEPTEMBER 2016



Arberita Jashari, Rookie of the Month  
 Ashley Hatz, Student of the Month  
 Anthony Bernhard, Role Model of the Month  
 Raquelle Dahlman, Most Improved Student of the Month

### NOVEMBER 2016



Role Model of the Month: Cole Westmoreland  
 Student of the Month: Jamie Goslin  
 Rookie of the Month: Alison Garbe  
 Most Improved: Ashton Harty



**SHS Senior, Sean Baker** was recently honored with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen Award for Seneca High School. He is the son of Gerry and Kathy Baker of Seneca. The Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award honors an outstanding senior who exhibits the qualities of dependability, leadership, service and patriotism. The selection was voted on by the faculty and staff. Sean is an excellent student and is extremely involved at Seneca High School and in the community. He is a member of the Math Team, Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (W.Y.S.E.), Spanish Club, and Teens Resisting Unhealthy Social Temptations (TRUST). He is on the Golf Team, Basketball Team, Track Team is the National Honor Society treasurer. Sean is also the senior class president. As the recipient of the DAR Good Citizen Award, Sean has completed an essay that will have the opportunity to advance through state and national levels of judging. The Illini Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution sponsors the DAR Good Citizens program and scholarship contest.

**The National Merit Scholarship Corporation** has also named Sean as a *Commended Student* in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended Students are recognized for their exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT exam used for program entry. Sean is pictured with Seneca High School Principal Marty Voiles. Congratulations to Sean for his academic excellence during his high school career.



“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

- John C. Maxwell



From the Desk of Assistant Principal Mike Coughlin

It doesn't take very long walking the halls at Seneca High School to see our future community leaders in action. Seneca High School students are often seen in action within our community displaying appropriate principles. I'm truly excited for Joey, Issac, and Bianca on their selection to represent S.H.S. at the 2017 HOBY leadership Seminar. I'm confident that they will be challenged during the conference to reflect on their leadership skills. The Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership organization has a long-standing record of helping to build outstanding leaders in schools and communities. Their values of volunteerism, integrity, excellence, diversity, and community partnership are congruent with the core values of "The Seneca Way." I have personally seen prior Seneca High students truly blossom after attending HOBY conference. They often come back with a lot of gusto and enthusiasm, knowing how and inspired to make a difference each and every day.

I would also like to take the time to recognize the students who were selected to attend the I-8 Leadership Conference this year. These seven students were selected to represent Seneca High School, based on their potential leadership abilities. I'm excited for all of our leadership students, for their families, and for Seneca High School, as these students' perspectives are going to be altered forever.



### HOBY LEADERSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

Joey Thomas, Isaac Brockman, and Bianca Evett, Seneca High School sophomores, have been selected to represent Seneca Township High School at the 2017 HOBY Leadership Seminar. The Leadership Seminar is designed for high school sophomores to recognize their leadership talents and apply them in becoming effective, ethical leaders in their home, schools, work-place and community.

The students will participate in hands-on leadership activities and meet state leaders in such areas as business, government, education, media, and the non-profit sector.

Each September, every accredited public, private, and charter high school in the country is invited to select and register outstanding sophomores as representatives to their local state seminar. Currently, nearly 9,000 sophomores, representing as many high schools nationwide, attend HOBY Leadership Seminars annually.

Joey Thomas is the son of James and Becky Thomas of Mazon. Isaac Brockman is the son of Jason and Miranda of Verona and Bianca Evett is the daughter of Deborah Huter of Seneca. All Seneca High School sophomore students were invited to pick up applications and submit essays for the opportunity to attend this seminar. Congratulations to Joey, Isaac, and Bianca on their accomplishment.



### Seneca High School Students Attend I-8 Leadership Conference 2016

The Interstate Eight Leadership Conference was held on Monday, October 24th at Morris Country Club. Ted Wiese was the keynote speaker who presented a Dynamic Leadership & Team Building Program. The students worked in small groups to discuss and share leadership topics with the other school representatives. The students that represented Seneca High School are from left to right:

**Ashley Hatz, Trevor Till, Austin Cockream, Andrew Baker, Faith Thrun, Brittany Alsvig, Emma Elias**





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Athletic briefs with Activities Director, Steve Haines



## *Fly the W*

This past fall, “Fly the W” was heard around Chicagoland and far beyond, as the Chicago Cubs marched on to their first World Series Championship in 108 years. No disrespect to the fans of other baseball teams but hearing the phrase “The Chicago Cubs are World Series Champions” never gets old. In fact, I say it once a day, just to make myself smile. “Fly the W” is a phrase that we came to understand to mean a Cubs victory as they raise a large “W” on the flag pole in the centerfield bleachers. This Fall, the Cubs winning streak was just as big a story in Seneca HS as it was nationwide. So I thought about that famous phrase of “Fly the W” and how it could relate to the Land of the Irish. The “W” for Cubs stands for WIN, and as I look back at the athletics and activities thus far at Seneca High School, I think the “W” could stand for *WILL*.

Our students at Seneca High School have accepted the challenge to participate on teams, in clubs, or in other organizations in record percentages. Our enrollment has dropped slightly over the past few years, but our participation in activities just keeps going up! Those activities are called extra-curricular, and that means more time and more effort, or in other words...*WILL*. I am so proud of the students who choose to show the *WILL* to belong, to excel, to lead, and to compete without knowledge of whether they will win or lose, reach their goal or fall short. It is never fun to come up empty trying to reach a goal when you have put so much time and effort into that very goal. An overtime soccer game loss; not qualifying for state by mere seconds; or forgetting that line in a play are examples of events that cause our students some frustration. But the *WILL* it took to get to overtime; to finish mere seconds from state; or to just get up on stage are the things that our students will take with them that *WILL* help them accomplish those and even higher goals in the future. Seneca High students go the extra mile to “Fly the W”.

I am so proud of all the Seneca High School students who choose to put on an Irish uniform or join a club. It is their time and with their free *WILL* that they give to the Land of the Irish and continue to make Seneca High School a better place year after year. My hope is that the students of Seneca High School will continue to *Fly the W*. My other hope is that the Cubs continue to *Fly the W* on that centerfield flag pole in Wrigley. **#Irishpride Happy Holidays from Steve Haines, Activities Director at Seneca High School**



### **West Campus Community Room**

Seneca High School, in collaboration with the Seneca Park Board, is providing an area that can be rented by community members for meetings, parties and senior citizen activities. Available for rent at West Campus: Meeting Room with tables and chairs, a gymnasium, and a newly renovated kitchen area. If interested in renting any of the spaces at the West Campus, **contact the Village Hall at 815-357-8771.**



### **Start your New Year off on the right foot and join the SHS Fitness Center!**

The SHS Fitness Center is open to the community for membership. Members are able to utilize a fully functional facility with everything from weight to cardio training. The Fitness center is open Monday-Friday before and after school for a small fee. Quarterly: \$30.00 or Annually: \$100.00

(\$20.00 Discount with prepaid annual membership)

- College Student Winter Break: \$10.00 / College Student Summer Break: \$30.00
- SHS Student: Always Free

Member Requirements: Sign a release form / Reside in the Seneca High School District / Purchase a key FOB with a \$10.00 returnable deposit.

**For more information on joining the SHS Fitness Center visit [senecahs.org](http://senecahs.org) (You will find the fitness center link under the Parent/Student Tab) or stop in the fitness center during community hours. Please call 815-357-5000 during school hours for more details.**



**SHS FITNESS CENTER HOURS**

**Morning Hours:**  
Monday—Friday  
5:00 am—7:00 am

**Evening Hours:**  
Monday thru Thursday  
4:00 pm—7:00 pm  
Friday 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm

\*\*\*Closed on all School Holidays\*\*\*





# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



**Long-time Seneca resident receives first ever Honorary Diploma from SHS Board of Education:** Bob Hollenbeck's daughter, Elaine Wheeler, of Madison Wisconsin, sent a heartfelt letter to Superintendent Jim Carlson that included a very special request unbeknownst to her father. In her letter, Elaine wrote about her dad's many impressive accomplishments; and she also wrote about his desire to obtain the one thing he did not yet have:

*Dad will be 97 years old on October 1, 2016; some say he's the eldest resident of Seneca. When he talks with people he frequently says, "I didn't get a chance to go to high school." There was no transportation in the DuPont area at the time, no school bus, and his family didn't have the means to transport him and his brother, like their cousins did.*

*Dad embodies the concept of a lifelong learner. He apprenticed himself informally to carpenter and then became a journeyman carpenter. He was a union member for over 70 years. In the late 1970's he was approached by the vocational school in Morris and asked to teach carpenter apprentices, which he did for 8 years. His graduates still approach him and thank him for his excellent teaching.*

*By the way, he built the trophy cases in the Seneca High School. Cabinetry is his specialty.*

*He also taught himself--and took lessons--to play several musical instruments. He played guitar and banjo in others' and then his own 4 and 5 piece orchestra, once again being a member of the musicians' union for 50 years.*

After some investigation, Dr. Carlson forwarded the request onto the Board of Education, and after a formal evaluation was completed, the Honorary Diploma was granted to Mr. Hollenbeck at a special presentation during the September Board meeting.

## Congratulations to Bob and his family!



## SENECA HIGH & FFA ORGANIZATION HONOR VETERAN'S AND AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY AT NOVEMBER ASSEMBLY...



This year's guest speaker, Pastor Choi, was a veteran of the Korean army, serving from 2008 - 2010. Pastor Choi grew up in an average Korean family. Every male adult in Korea is required to serve in the military for two years. Pastor Choi came to America as a student in 2010 to study at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL. He graduated in June of 2015 and became Pastor at the Methodist Church in Seneca and Marseilles. He married his wife, Dali, on October 12, 2015. Before coming to the United States he did not speak any English and has spent many hours overcoming this barrier. Pastor Choi is working on his citizenship and hopes to become a citizen within six years.



**The American Legion Auxiliary Group of Seneca was recognized at this years Veteran's Day Assembly. This group is comprised of spouses, daughters, and granddaughters of veterans.**





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



## New SHS Teaching Staff



Mrs. Sara Durdan

After becoming our school's third nursing teacher in the last three years, Mrs. Sara Durdan says, "I'm here to stay as long as they'll have me." After seeing an ad in the paper for the position, she decided it would be cool to give back to the students what her teacher did for her. As a senior at Ottawa High School, she took the CNA class, where Mrs. Rene Kranov, her teacher, made her want to become a nurse. When asked what her favorite part of the job was she replied, "Introducing kids to the health care field." (She was unable to come up with her least favorite part.) Durdan feels that it is such an amazing aspect that she gets to influence kids the way her teacher did for her.

Mrs. Durdan graduated from Lewis University in Romeoville with her BSN degree. Her healthcare career began when she was 17 years old working at Heritage Health in Peru as a CNA. While in nursing school, she began working as a CNA on the Medical Surgical unit at OSF in Ottawa and then later transitioned to an RN position after completing her nursing degree. Mrs. Durdan has nursing experience in Medical Surgical Nursing, Primary Care Clinical Education, and Ambulatory Surgery. She's at Seneca now because she wanted the change, which Durdan claims is one of the many benefits of being a nurse. "Nursing gives a person a sense of fulfillment when you experience making a patient's life better," she explained. Durdan now resides in Grand Ridge, with her husband Eddie Durdan and daughter Charlotte. As a family, they enjoy traveling together and going to the park, as well as hanging out at home. With her 4-year-old daughter, Durdan enjoys doing puzzles and playing with dolls. An interesting fact is that she and her family are currently restoring an 1860's barn to become their new home.

Article submitted by: **Eve Odum**, SHS Junior, Class of 2018



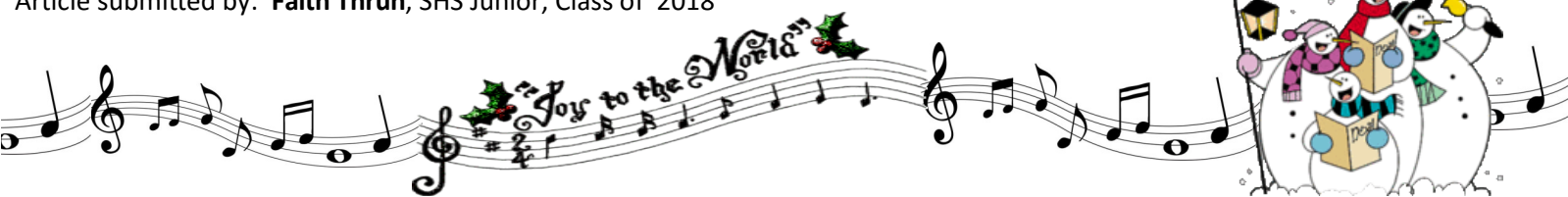
Mr. Luke Windham

Mr. Luke Windham is one of the newest editions to the staff here at Seneca Township High School. Before coming to Seneca, he worked at Mazon Verona Kinsman for eleven years. He said that "It just felt right to make a move" in his career, when he heard of the opening here. He even stated that this "felt natural, from the first marching band rehearsal this summer. . . like it was meant to be." He has always felt this way about music in general. He speaks fondly of his childhood and of the time he spent dancing in front of his parent's turntable. Mr. Windham went on to say, "I would sit and watch T.V. after school and practice the trumpet during the commercial breaks."

His love of music continued through high school, when band was his favorite class. He says that his music taste ranges from the Notorious B.I.G. to Anton Bruckner. Bruckner is his favorite composer because Bruckner would listen to people's criticism and would then revise his compositions. This makes sense, considering that Mr. Windham believes one should "always consider the needs of others before your own."

Another sentiment that Mr. Windham shared is that he thinks "we live in an amazing world," so he doesn't want people to miss it by "staring at a phone screen." Since he believes so strongly in that sentiment, he would say that the worst part of working at Seneca is not having a window to the outside world in his classroom. Mr. Windham also says that he is "drawn to the color blue," which is the color of the sky. However, he does his most favorite thing each and every day when he is able to direct the different ensembles in his classes. Windham also enjoys rehearsing music with his students. After settling into SHS a bit more, he would like to get out of his secluded corner of the school and get to know the rest of the staff better. He says that he is "so impressed with everyone here...their professionalism, their kindness, and their willingness to do things for others." Mr. Windham is so happy to have come to Seneca High to teach band, choir, and then some.

Article submitted by: **Faith Thrun**, SHS Junior, Class of 2018



**“Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!” — Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!***



## Student Highlights



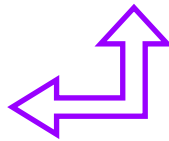
**SHS School Psychologist, Jill Rockrohr,** reports that during the week of January 16-20, 2017, Seneca High School will participate in national *No Name-Calling Week*, organized by the Gay-Straight Alliance. This event calls for schools to put kindness into action; and it inspires students and educators to continue ongoing dialogue about ways to challenge bullying in their schools and communities. Seneca High School students are working hard to plan events for this week that not only highlight what it means to be inclusive but also generate acts of kindness throughout our school and community.

As I brainstormed with our students recently about the types of activities that may promote kindness, I reflected on the generous acts that I have already witnessed in just this semester alone. There were the post-it notes anonymously placed on random lockers around the building with messages such as, “You’re worth it.” There were the 1800 pounds of food collected for the Seneca Food Pantry by the FCA. There are staff members who make sure that students have warm coats before bad weather sets in. And most recently, there was the money donated by students and staff by the FCCLA to fulfill the Christmas lists of 18 students who would otherwise not receive gifts. The examples of kindness and generosity in our building are plentiful.

Research shows that not only are acts of kindness and generosity contagious, but they are also linked to better mental and physical health, as well as greater feelings of belonging for both the giver and the recipient. During this holiday season, I encourage students, staff, and community members, alike, to join in the varied efforts to promote kindness. Not only will you be helping others, but you may just reap the benefits yourself.



On Tuesday, November 22nd, Seneca High School staff and students participated in Spirit Day to show support for LGBTQ youth and take a stand against bullying.



FCCLA club leader, Erica Read, provided a photo of the toys purchased with money that was donated by SHS students and staff. Mrs. Read stated: *“This is what Christmas is about, giving to others! I'm so proud to be part of such a great school! Thank you to all the SHS staff who participated and for encouraging your students to give to this project!”*



During Red Ribbon Week, TRUST members participated in "Grim Reaper Day" to promote awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. All students who participated were summoned from their classrooms by the Grim Reaper, were given a sign to tell the story of their drug related "death," and wore makeup to match their stories. To further symbolize their "deaths," participating students did not speak for the remainder of the day; the activity served as an effective message to the rest of the student body. The TRUST organization is headed by SHS English/Speech teacher, Katie Paddock, and by SHS Guidance Counselor, Chris Jackson.





## Seneca FFA Celebrates 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On November 24, 1936, 23 farm boys and their FFA Advisor, Verne Reifsteck, signed a charter establishing the Seneca Chapter of the Future Farmers of America. The Seneca FFA recently paused to celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary by serving 80 cent pork chops to the student body and enjoying their favorite Jello Cake for dessert. Using a program model that is still used today, the agricultural education program in 1936 was strictly for farm boys wishing to enter farming as a profession. That model combines classroom instruction that includes hands-on, practical knowledge, a Supervised Agricultural Experience Program, and involvement in the FFA. (In 1988, the name was changed to just "FFA" in order to better reflect the demographics of the organization.)



Ron Frye accepting award in 1947

The original agriculture classroom and shop were located in the basement of the former district school that once stood on the corner of Scott and Commerce Streets. Agriculture students excavated a ramp into the underground shop in order to allow tractors to be driven in to be serviced and painted. 1945 brought the first of what was to become a trademark of the Seneca FFA - livestock sales. The first sale was a boar and bred sow sale held in an old lumber shed behind the buildings on the east side of Main Street. In subsequent years, the sales were held in the land below what is now the old high school. This practice continued until 1950 when the Seneca FFA Sale Barn was erected on Shipyard Road. Formerly a pipe shed at the former Shipyards, the original sale barn was purchased for only \$40.00. The catch was that it had to be dismantled and moved from its position and re-erected. It was built on the land that now is occupied by the Crotty Park Shelter. In 1999, the current sale/show facility was built on the SHS Land Lab.

Mr. Sherwood Jackson retired in 1979 after 34 years of service to Seneca High School and the Seneca community. Hired to replace Sherwood was Richard Dunn, former teacher at Newark and Paw Paw. Mr. Dunn remained at Seneca until his retirement in 1989. Upon Mr. Dunn's retirement in 1989, Seneca High School committed to expand the agricultural education program by hiring Jeff Maierhofer and Kent Weber. SHS Science teacher, Fran Ogden, also served as an agriculture instructor from 1996 until 1999. The Seneca FFA was named the top chapter in Illinois from 1995 until 2012, a total of 18 consecutive years. It has ranked in the top 5 in the state every year since 1991. Other recognitions that the Seneca Ag Ed Program has received include the National Agricultural Educators Region 4 Outstanding Program in 1999, National FFA Models of Innovation in Chapter Development in 1999, Section Banker's Plaque for 25 years, signifying the outstanding chapter in Section VII, and 36 state winners in the National Chapter Award Development areas.

Individual highlights include: 25 American Degrees, two Star State Farmers, a State Star in Agribusiness, 41 state proficiency award winners, 14 national proficiency award finalists and six national winners. Seneca High School has served as the host site for over twenty-nine agricultural education student teachers. A cornerstone of the Seneca Ag Ed Program is the Land Laboratory, which was purchased in 1990. The 115 acre "farm" is located in section 22 of Manlius Township. The land lab includes 32 acres of cropland, 67 acres of timber, a cross-country path and nature trail, a pond, and the Ag Education Center, where livestock sales and other events are currently held.

Other iconic activities of the Seneca FFA include an annual farm toy show and auction, "30 MPH" (an annual community-wide roadside cleanup), the Seneca Club Calf Sale, participation in Career Development Events (Contests), leadership training, and the preparing of over 12,000 pork chops every year. Today, The Seneca FFA is 150 members strong and holds true to its mission of providing opportunities for those students desiring a career in agriculture and those who simply want to learn more about the environment in which they live.



FFA Seniors in 1974



### F.F.A.

Front Row: H. Schaefer, P. Thorson, T. Talty, B. Crawford, L. Strobel, R. Jackson, R. Danielson, F. Maier, J. Johnson, E. Frye.

2nd Row: Mr. Reifsteck, K. Anderson, H. Taylor, C. Chapman, W. Shaver, T. Morey, M. Myre, K. Peacock, A. Helland, R. Fewell, C. Olson.

Last Row: D. Anderson, H. Wheeler, E. Dunn, G. Baker, T. Reardon, E. Strobel, D. Danielson, R. Anderson, R. Holverson.

The Seneca FFA in 1942



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# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Seneca Township High School  
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