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# Principal's Newsletter

Somers High School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Okay, so apparently I jinxed the fact that we could have early graduation. However, it is only one snow day since the last newsletter so hopefully all will still play out accordingly. Both fingers and toes are crossed that March will go out like a lamb, concluding a very unusual Winter.

Quarter 3 is well underway. Our next big date is March 27<sup>th</sup> when the juniors will take the SAT. All juniors are required to test and will get the information they need to prepare. The testing schedule will be released shortly, with room assignments posted on the main office and CCC office windows. SAT testing will begin at 7:40am. Freshman, sophomores, and seniors will report to school at their normal time. In addition, juniors are also required to take the new Next Generation Science Standards test on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, positive changes are taking place at SHS to improve the learning environment beginning at the start of quarter 4. Two of the greatest issues we are confronted with are vaping and cell phones. The former is currently being addressed through several initiatives such as our vaping plan (sent to everyone last month), assemblies, and Vaping Facts on our Morning Announcements. As for the latter, we all know cell phone usage amongst students has become a difficult problem at all schools throughout the country, and SHS is no different. I am proud of our high school and in comparison to many we are doing extremely well in this area. That said we are always looking for ways to improve the overall educational environment. The leadership team and the staff have put together a plan that we hope will stymie

inappropriate cell phone use in the classroom. Details of the plan will be rolled out to everyone within the next two weeks. The basics are as follows: Each classroom will be given a cell phone storage device. All students entering the class will be asked to power off their phone(s) and place it in the box. No exceptions. When class is over, students will be able to retrieve their phones. If a teacher needs students to use their phone for classwork, they will instruct their students accordingly. If a student is caught with a phone, using a phone, or not putting it in the storage device, the phone will be collected turned over to administration and the parent will need to come and get it. Additional consequences will also be metered out. Juniors and seniors may still use their phones during study hall and all students can use their phones during lunch and in the hallways between classes. No one is permitted to use their phone if sent from the classroom to the restroom, office and/or any other location. The new BoE cell phone policy is in the process of being approved. We are trying not to penalize our students but rather make all of our classrooms a sanctuary for learning. We ask for your help in supporting this new initiative.

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  
Principal  
Somers High School

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### **Assistant Principal's Corner**

#### **Celebrating the Spartan Code**

Students who go above and beyond in our school community have the opportunity to earn Spartan Tickets from their teachers. They can use these little yellow tickets for store credit at the school store. In addition, once those tickets have been "spent" at the store, they are entered into a drawing and students have opportunities to win a gift card from Dunkin' Donuts. We encourage students who have earned tickets to spend them so that they will be considered for our drawing. We are pleased to announce our most recent Spartan Code winners:

Freshman - Jack Denehy  
Sophomore - Kyiah Rice  
Junior - Wula Cham  
Senior - Dan Woodward

### **Seeking Student Assistance: Advisory**

Mrs. Gustafson would like to revitalize Advisory and to make it a more student-driven endeavor. If you are a student with fresh ideas, would like to provide input to improve this program, and are able to invest some time into developing engaging lessons, please email Mrs. Gustafson at [cheryl.gustafson@somers.k12.ct.us](mailto:cheryl.gustafson@somers.k12.ct.us). We will meet on Monday, April 1st at 2:30 in the Perrault Center. Snacks will be provided.

### **“Spring Cleaning” -- Taking Care of Outstanding Detentions**

As we move into spring, we also move into exciting end-of-year activities. In order for students to participate, they must serve any owed detentions. If your son or daughter is unsure if any past detentions are owed, please come to the main office for more information.

### **Seniors - Caps and Gowns**

If you are a senior and have not yet ordered your cap and gown, please do so ASAP. If you are not sure if you have completed an order yet, please see Mrs. Caron in the main office. Students may obtain the online ordering form information in the office.

### **Class Rings**

Over the past two weeks, representatives from Jostens have visited the school to provide information about ordering class rings. If you are interested, order packets are available in the main office.

## ***Student Recognition***

### **CAS Arts Award:**

Rose Karvandi (Performing Arts)  
Alexandra Delesio (Visual Arts)

### **CAS Scholar Athletes:**

Emily Renzoni  
Hayden Barrett

### **Governors Scholar Award:**

Victoria Reid

### **ShopRite Act of Kindness:**

AJ Brewer, Kilee Nutbrown, Cadence Bidwell, Dominic Zuccalo, Wula Cham

### **Student of the Month:**

*Freshman:* Jack Denehy, Katiya Zawronty, Rachel St. Germain, Kaede Wood, Dana Gall

*Sophomore:* Halle Raina, Maddie Mancuso, Shawn Gentilcore, Miguel Rodriguez, Dominic Zuccalo

*Junior:* Summer Nadler, Kylie Raymond, Matthew Grandpre, Quinn Welch, Tori Reid

*Senior:* Alyssa Albano, Luke Phillips, Tori Augeri, Kyle Beebe, Bryan Bushey

## CCC News

Junior College Planning Night was held in the SHS media center on Wednesday, March 6th. Greg Diaz, admissions counselor from Sacred Heart University and high school counselors Lisa Grenier and Karen Regan presented to an audience of junior students and their parents.

Counselors will be meeting with juniors in classrooms soon to teach them how to do a college search through our Naviance program. We hope this lesson results in students knowing how to create a list of colleges to which they might be interested in applying.

*April vacation* is a great time to visit college campuses because their school is in session giving high school students the ability to see the campus in action! The attached powerpoint presentation provides many helpful tips on the college application process and campus visits, including great questions to ask and things to look for when visiting a college.

[https://hs.somers.k12.ct.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_61483/File/College%20Planning%20Night%20PowerPoint.pdf](https://hs.somers.k12.ct.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_61483/File/College%20Planning%20Night%20PowerPoint.pdf)

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## Mathematics Department News

The Math Department has been working on exposing students to the real world applications of mathematics. A variety of classes have completed projects or assignments to this end.

In Geometry, students just finished exploring how to calculate the heights of objects in the auditorium using a Clinometer and the Law of Sines. In Honors Geometry, students are completing research papers on careers that require right triangle trigonometry and then creating real world scenario problems for each career.

In Statistics, students have completed projects where they solved problems of their choice involving the comparison of two mean. For example: do the New York Jets get more penalties than the New England Patriots, do Stop and Shop grocery bags hold more weight than Walmart bags, which Chinese food restaurant is more expensive in Somers, does Geissler's carry healthier food than Big Y?

In AP Calculus, students completed a project in which they optimized the volume a can could hold based on a specific surface area. This is a useful application for manufacturing and business.

In Consumer Math, students are learning about investments and currently enrolled in

The Stock Market Game, which is run by the Hartford Courant. Each student was given \$100,000 of investment money. They are able to invest in any company on the NYSE/NASDAQ over an 8 week period. A prize will be awarded to the student with the most equity at the end of the game.

### Guest Speaker Forums Enlighten Students About Careers

A number of informative Guest Speaker Forums have been sponsored by the Counseling & Career Center this year. In November, State Trooper Craig Jones, a district School Resource Officer, shared steps to become a law enforcement officer with interested students.

In December and January two Health Care Career Forums were held with five Somers alumni currently studying to become health care professionals. At the December forum, Nicole Gay (UCONN/YALE) shared her career journey to become a Nurse Practitioner, Zack Varnauskus (Springfield College) discussed his Physical Therapy training and Dominic DiFilipi (URI) spoke about becoming a Pharmacist.

At the January forum, Karisa Welch (UCONN/St. Joe's) described her path to become a Physician Assistant and Samantha Percoski (Quinnipiac) explained the requirements to become an Ultrasound Technology Technician. The alumni answered questions and discussed the transition to college life, their clinical rotations, experiences with patients and more. Fifty students participated.



In February, representatives from the Somers Fire Department and the Enfield Police Explorers visited the high school to discuss local volunteer opportunities as Emergency Response Technicians and Police Explorers. These opportunities provide students with valuable career exposure and help the community at the same time. Many thanks to with SHS alumni Josh and Shawn Marquardt of the Somers Fire Department and Lt. William Pedemonte with the Enfield Police for providing information to students on how they can become involved.



Guest Speaker Forums occur several times a year to introduce students to a variety of career and volunteer options. These events are publicized to the school community through student emails and morning announcements. Students register in the Counseling & Career Center to attend these events. For more information contact Meg Duffy, Career Specialist. She can be reached at [meg.duffy@somers.k12.ct.us](mailto:meg.duffy@somers.k12.ct.us) .

### **“One Spartan Hoodie, Please!”**

With the New Year came a revitalization of our school store. Among the changes are new apparel (including hooded sweatshirts, short-sleeve t-shirts, and athletic style long-sleeve shirts) as well as a new digital menu board. But, what really has students talking is the store’s new “please” pricing policy!

The new menu indicates two prices for every item sold. For example, if a student comes to the store and says “one Powerade, please” they will receive the lower of the two prices, while “I’ll take a Powerade” would result in the higher price.

Here’s a Q&A with the store’s co-advisors, Mr. Clement and Mrs. Yarrows:

**Q: Are the students really that bad with manners? Why the change?**

**A:** No. Although some students don’t say “please” in the beginning of a transaction, most at least say “thank you” at the end. There’s a small, but noticeable, percentage that does neither. As consistent with the Spartan Code of SHS, the new pricing reinforces the importance of not overlooking how they represent themselves during routine interactions with others. Little things like this may one day set them apart when looking for a job, seeking career advancement, etc. It’s our job to teach students society’s expectations. Think about it... who would you rather work with?

**Q: Have you noticed any changes?**

**A:** Yes. Most importantly, we notice people are talking about it. Valuable conversations can lead to change and we already notice an increase in the number of people who say “please.” It’s been a positive experience.

**Q: Does the pricing policy apply to all customers or just students?**

**A:** Yes, we believe in “walking the talk.” The pricing applies to students, teachers, administrators, and parents equally.

**Q: What if someone only has enough money for the lower price of an item?**

**A:** We’re not out to make higher profits – it’s about the valuable teaching opportunity. We have a 5-minute reset policy. If someone didn’t bring enough money for the higher price, they can come back to the store in 5-minutes, say “please,” and receive the lower price. It allows for reflection and personal growth.



## Continued Success for the SHS Yearbook Team



Each year the SHS Yearbook Team awaits results from national and regional competitions, for the previous year's publication. And, the results are in. For their 2018 publication "*Trial & TRIUMPH*," the team earned "First Class" honor rating from the National Scholastic Press Association, "Silver Medalist" recognition from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, Third place honors in the Lifetouch National School Studios Yearbook Showcase Contest, and "Highest Achievement" recognition for journalism by the New England Scholastic Press Association. This marks the fifth consecutive year the team has earned success both nationally and regionally. The team's work will now be displayed in various publications across the United States and Canada.

"We have very dedicated and creative team members who believe in one simple and clear goal... to create a yearbook better than the last," Yearbook Advisor Mr. Clement stated in regards to why the team was able to earn success in the competitions.

Particularly notable for the team was the Highest Achievement recognition in the area of journalism.

"Our team's strengths have traditionally been their design work and creativity. Over the span of three years we've been working meticulously to improve our journalism efforts and it's great to see objective feedback showing the effort is paying off," Mr. Clement concluded.

## Tech Seminar students engaged in building cell phone cubbies.

Seniors Hayden Barrett, Kyle Beebe and Trever LaMontagne are well on their way to completing the schools request for cell phone cubbies. They designed three different styles that allowed the staff to select one that best suits their needs. A total of 50 units are presently under construction with anticipation delivery dates coming over

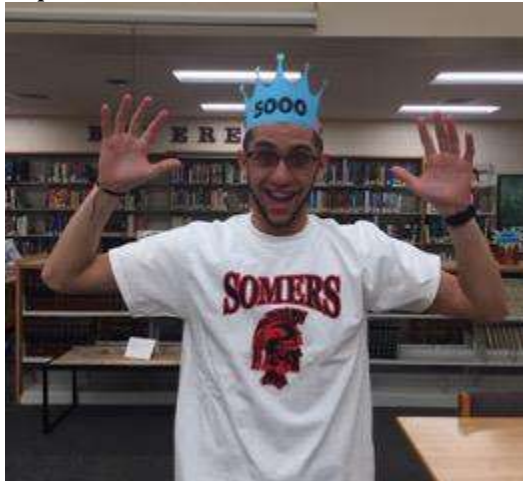


the three weeks.

This activity required them to design prototypes, test them, select what they feel was in the best interest of both the students and staff. Two designs required CAD/CAM techniques to enable the slots to be produced on the school's CNC overhead router while the other design required laser cut 300 interlocking pieces of hardboard material. Other woodworking equipment rounded out the process along with finishing techniques for completion. During this six week experience, over 1000 pieces will be produced and assembled.

## **Library Media Center Happenings**

February was a short but busy month in the Media Center. Mrs. Connor's and Mr. Slater's freshman English classes used the app GooseChase to guide them through all of the tools available to create a paper in NoodleTools. Mr. Slater's class also participated in a scavenger hunt that used Shakespeare-related resources in the LMC to help translate the prologue from Romeo and Juliet into modern language. To kick off the beginning of her Creative Writing class, Ms. Collins used the Media Center to host an escape room style-Breakout EDU. The activity promoted team building and communication among classmates and encouraged "outside the box" thinking that students will need over the semester. Lastly, the LMC had its 5,000 study hall student this month! Congratulations go out to Nick. In addition to bragging rights and an awesome crown, he also received a Spartans t-shirt to show off his spirit.



## **National Foreign Language Week**

National Foreign Language Week was March 3rd-9th this year. To celebrate it, several students from Mr. Mangini's classes and clubs took over the Spartan News Network. During morning announcements, Somers High students were greeted with the day's information in Farsi, Dutch, German, French, and Danish. Presenters also gave an interesting fact about the country they were representing. It was a fun way for some of our linguistically diverse students to share their talents with the school community.



## **Spartans Gamers' League Has Begun**

Somers High School recently added a new varsity sport to its lineup with the creation of the Spartan Gamers' League. Sanctioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference in October, eSports promotes teamwork, communication, leadership, and strategic thinking. Connecticut was one of the first states in the nation to offer esports as a varsity sport on the PlayVS platform.

Last week, Coach DeMatteo and the ten members of the Spartans Gamers' League kicked off the inaugural season. With help from the IT department, the Library Media Center's computer lab and downstairs computer lab were set up to meet the necessary gaming requirements for the two events students will be competing in this Spring. The members of the Rocket League team will work in a group of 3 to compete against 9 other teams from across the state. The game combines car driving and soccer skills in five minute rounds. The Smite team's group of 5 will work together to level up their mythological characters in order to achieve certain objectives. They will compete with 62 schools from across the country. The season, which runs from February 25th through April 22nd, consists of weekly matches. Playoffs and finals begin in May with the State Championship being held as a live event.

While gaming may be a newer sport at the high school level, currently 200 colleges and universities have esports teams, with approximately \$10 million dollars available in scholarships. For more information, please visit the sites below.

[CAS-CIAC eSports PlayVS Competition](#)

[National Federation of State High School Associations](#)

[PlayVS](#)



## Spartan Sports


With the winter season entering the last two weeks of play, our boy's basketball team is playing Putnam at home on **March 7th** in the 2nd round of the CIAC DIV state tournament, while the Tri-Town hockey team has advanced to the DIII 2nd round after their 1st round 4-0 win over Staples. The girl's basketball team won their first NCCC playoff game in over (10) years, while also advancing to the 2nd round of the Class S state tournament before losing to NCCC Champion Canton. The wrestling team has completed their season after finishing 13th in the Class S Championships on February 16th at Windham High School. Despite only having (3) indoor track athletes participating in the Class S Indoor Championships, our boys and girls both finished 14th overall highlighted by Kylie Raymond's 2nd place finish in the 3200 m race. Our Unified Sports basketball team will have their only home game on March 5th, and the league is still trying to re-scheduled the snowed-out NCCC Unified event. For more information and weekly updates, please refer to the Somers High School athletics tab on the district website. **The winter sports awards date** will be announced over the next week. Spring sports sign-ups are still available on our sports website, and baseball pitchers/catchers conditioning start on March 9th followed by all spring sports team on March 16th.



## SHS Music Department Update


The SHS Band is excited to welcome Dr. Robert Schwartz from Central Connecticut University to our band hall on March 20th! Dr. Schwartz will be joining the band students during their rehearsal to give a clinic and will be offering a “Careers in Music” session for all SHS students later in the school day.

On March 27, the Somers Music Department will be performing at the Somers High School in a very special All District Concert!! The SHS Band, SHS Honors Choir, SHS Chorus, and the 5th grade Advanced Band and Chorus will be participating in this event. This concert will give students an opportunity to perform together across grade levels and come together as a music community. There will be tickets required for admission due to limited seating. Three free tickets will be provided to every family and extra tickets may be requested from any of the music teachers. A donation collection box will be available at the door if you would like to contribute to the Somers Music Patrons.


 **The Drowsy Chaperone**

Music & Lyrics by Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison      Book by Bob Martin and Don McKellar

General Admission \$12    Student/Senior Admission \$10

 **March 15th 7pm**  
**March 16th 2pm, 7pm**

Robert Percoski Auditorium at  
**Somers High School,**  
**5 Vision Blvd**



The Drowsy Chaperone  
is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also  
supplied by MTI. [www.MTIshows.com](http://www.MTIshows.com)