



Our Schools

S U M M E R • 2 0 2 2

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Steven Carmina '74



Architect Steven Carmina is a graduate of West Seneca East Senior High's first ever freshman class, graduating with the class of 1974. He is certain that if not for one highly inspirational teacher near the end of his high school career, he may not be where he is now.

Carmina is the President/CEO of Carmina Wood Morris, DPC, an architectural firm in downtown Buffalo, whose scope of work ranges from the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of iconic Buffalo landmarks, to interior business spaces. One look at the company's website, linked above, attests to Carmina's stature as a powerhouse in the industry. And it all started in West Seneca as a lark of sorts.

From the West Side of Buffalo, Carmina's family moved to West Seneca where he attended Allendale Elementary when he was 11 years old in 1967, then went on to East Middle. He remembers well, the elaborate Industrial Arts wing in West Seneca East High, where a student could participate in wood shop, print shop, drafting, welding, and more. In junior high and high school, he also participated in music and sports: chorus, saxophone,

clarinet, track, football, and soccer. He recalls how, as part of East High's first class of freshmen, students were given a list of colors and names to vote on the newly formed school's colors and mascot.

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ATTENTION WEST SENECA ALUMNI!

West Seneca Central School District graduates are doing great things in our community and around the world. **Please take a moment to tell us about your experience in the West Seneca Schools**, as well as what you've been up to since graduation. We have formulated a quick 12-question survey for you. Your answers will help to inform our work as educators as we continue to create programming and opportunities for our students.

Please participate and encourage all of the alumni you know to do so also!

Scan for more info



Daniel Berger, Keeper Of Memories

It's difficult to know how to qualify who Daniel W. Berger is in terms of a title. He's that rare person who is energetically entrenched in so many parts of the town, and with so many groups, that it's hard to say what takes precedence for Dan. He's an alumnus of the West Seneca West Class of '73, who heads the West High Alumni Association, is a recent past Boy Scout leader, sometime foster parent, de facto historian, collector and builder of a WSCSD yearbook section in our local public library, and parent to Molly, a shining star of a West Seneca High student, who passed away in 2011.

Only 14 at the time and an only child, Molly was diagnosed with Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH), a rare blood disorder that took her almost as quickly as it was discovered. This sudden loss was devastating to her parents, Daniel and Gail Radtke Berger, along with our schools, and an entire community.

"Molly," says her father, "used to come to alumni meetings with me when she was little, bringing her coloring books." Her father thinks she must have been paying attention to the meetings even at a very young age because she had big plans that included West High, specifically their music department.

"Molly had three goals, all involving the arts," says Dan. "She wanted to be in the Bel Canto Choir, the Wind Ensemble,

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A Letter from Superintendent Matthew Bystrak



Matthew J. Bystrak
Superintendent of Schools

WEST SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Offices • 1397 Orchard Park Road • West Seneca, New York 14224-4098
Telephone: 716/677-3100 • Facsimile: 716/677-3104



Greetings West Seneca Families:

As we move toward summer break, we have been gearing up for the 2022-2023 school year ahead. This has been a wonderful, full year of in-person education, and the gratitude of being together every day was palpable in both our staff and our students. No longer do we take our time together for granted. It is so good to end the year together with all traditions in place.

One embraced best practice from the past few years is outdoor graduations on our newly reconstructed and resurfaced senior high fields. Everyone is excited to be taking part and enjoying our newly adopted settings. There are scheduled ceremonies for each high school as follows: East Senior - Thursday, June 23rd at 7:00, (Rain Date, Sunday, June 26th at 4:00). West Senior - Wednesday, June 22nd at 7:00 on the field, (auditorium if there is rain).

This summer, we will double the number of students in our elementary summer program offerings, and will continue to offer essential summer programming to our middle and high school students. Our Capital Project will continue with some of the most notable work taking place at West Middle School this summer. In August, we will host our "On My Way to K!" welcome event for kindergartners and their families. The event will take place at West Seneca Soccer complex on August 24th, with open house hours from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. (See flier in this issue.)

The Board of Education will be having its reorganizational meeting in early July (check wscschools.org for details), and I would like to take this time to welcome Vincent Vanderlip to our Board. With a lifelong career devoted to education, we are excited about the knowledge and experience Mr. Vanderlip will bring.

If you are a parent in the district, I ask that you please consider joining your child's parent group and/or sports booster clubs. As students graduate or move on to other schools, their parents move on too. We need devoted and involved parents to join up and be the champions and changemakers at their children's schools. Please contact your child's principal today!

If you haven't joined us on Facebook (West Seneca Central Schools) and Twitter (@WestSenecaCSD), please do so. You will find a wealth of information there, along with a lively community of fellow parents and alumni. Here's to a long summer filled with sunny days while making happy memories! Thank you for your continued support of the West Seneca Central Schools.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew J. Bystrak".

Matthew Bystrak
Superintendent

Outstanding Teaching and Learning

Irreplaceable Teacher: Kim Strell

Watching art teacher Kim Strell begin a class with her 3rd grade art students is a cultural experience in itself. Kim is poised, patient, informative, and demonstrates what she is talking about so her students get audible and visual cues. The students listen quietly with a good level of maturity because Mrs. Strell obviously knows what she's talking about and they know--if they listen well, their outcome will be better. Art class is fun, and so is Mrs. Strell. Students, by and large, want to please teachers they know have their success at heart. "Make artists' choices," she reminds them.

A shared art teacher until this year, Kim Strell has taught in nearly every elementary and middle school in the District for a total of 10 years, though she has been a teacher for 13 years. She loves her big room at Northwood and says, "Homebase is best." Her first involvement in the district was as a sub, until an astute administrator asked her to come in as a long term. Full time hiring came soon after.

"I love the elementary schools," Kim says, "I see every child, K through 5." That means Kim has the beginnings of a six-year relationship with each student in the building. Within that span, Kim teaches her students art history, the meaning of art, and then technique. When school was remote, Kim held classes, but also made a website full of everyday challenges for young artists. The result was invaluable. She says, "Kids figured out they could do art on their own with available resources. For some of them, there was a realization for the first time that art was something they could do outside of this classroom." Aside from the art she made sure her students were practicing, Kim says, "I started a weekly news channel my students could tune in to. Just to see my face, meet my pets and my family. It was good for all of us."

Northwood Principal Angela Ferri says, "Kim is a bright light, who is woven into every aspect of our building. She is more than an



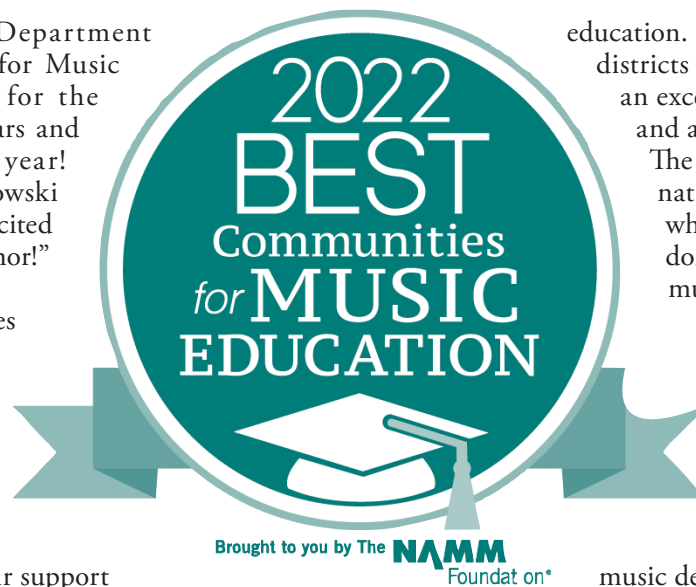
art teacher. She is a mentor, she co-advises our Kindness Club with Mrs. Fitzpatrick, she advises the Art Club and Yearbook Club, and is a member of our PBIS Committee and Literacy PSP. She even supervises our Pokemon Club."

Fellow staff members describe Kim as dynamic. Principal Ferri says, "She is full of positive energy and Northwood spirit! She is always going out of her way to create and come up with unique ideas to make Northwood a better place. Kim is a team player and strives to make meaningful connections with all staff and students at Northwood."

Music Department Receives National Award

West Seneca Music Department Earns "Best Community for Music Education" Designation for the NINTH time in recent years and the SIXTH consecutive year! Music Director Trevor Jelowski says, "We are extremely excited and proud to receive this honor!"

NAMM states: "In its 23rd year, Best Communities for Music Education is a signature program of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation that recognizes and celebrates school districts and schools for their support of, and commitment to, music education as well as efforts to assure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education. The award program recognizes outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders who have made music education part of a well-rounded



education. Designations are made to districts and schools that demonstrate an exceptionally high commitment and access to music education.

The award highlights music as a national education issue and shows what your school or community is doing to provide opportunities for music learning."

Jelowski says, "Thank you to our West Seneca Board of Education members, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and community members for your continued, outstanding support of our

music department! We are humbled and proud to be recognized among the top music departments in our country!" I wholeheartedly agree with Trevor's sentiments, and I thank him for his oversight of a music department that works so hard toward student enrichment and excellence.

Planet Custodianship: Student Recycling

Each Friday, Charlotte Marlinski, 1:1 East Middle teacher aide, accompanies students while they pick up paper for recycling. On this day, students Brenda and Emma from teacher Kimberly Bonuito's 12:1:1 class, joined in the effort. Paper is brought to maintenance and placed in recycling bins, which is good for the planet. Bottles are cashed in and help to pay for student activities and field trips. Good for you, students!



Daniel Berger

- continued from page 1

and a school musical.” She hit all three goals including taking the role of Little Ti Moune in the musical, *Once on This Island*, in her freshman year. It was the perfect role for a talented, fearless, and petite young woman.

The girl who memorialized the phrase, “Music is the air you breathe,” now has a scholarship set up in her name at West Senior - The Molly Berger Memorial Scholarship. Those words are displayed as part of a backstage mural now, painted by another student, and there as a reminder of how music is an intrinsic part of people like Molly. With her voice and her wind instruments (flute and oboe), she deftly made air into music. West Senior music teacher Keith Ersing tells his incoming freshmen about Molly every year. The remembrance of this sweet, talented girl who wanted to be a part of the music department so badly--and met all of her goals freshman year--provides pure inspiration and possibly a new sense of determination to Molly's like-minded younger successors.

The purpose in the telling of Molly's story also helps to understand Dan better; he was always entrenched in the community, always went to music performances, always made sure he was surrounded by young people and looking to ensure that students had every grand opportunity that was a match for their potential.

Regarding Molly's story, Dan says, “So many don't know how to bring a tragic subject up, or simply choose to refrain from it, but it is immensely therapeutic for one to get it out of his or her system every once in a while.” And so, it only makes sense that Dan would help West Seneca Public Library's Director, Robert Alessi, curate a section of yearbooks from every year he could find as a record of history,

a trip down memory lane, and in some circumstances, he says with a chuckle, a chance for old friends “to come around and settle a beer bet.” The books are microchipped and for reference only, due to the precious memories they hold.

The Keeper of Memories. That's what you might say Dan's main title is these days. He would love to see someone younger step up to the task of leading the alumni association because, like he says, “It's everybody's project.” Still, it's hard for him to get out of the cycle. Yearbooks, as well as the missing years, for all of West Seneca's high and junior high schools can be found in the library database – West Seneca 2009; West Seneca East 1971, 1981, 1987, 2000, etc. Dan needs help to keep these memories alive. Click the link above to see a spreadsheet.

In terms of book bound memories, Dan says he and Gail found a journal Molly kept shortly after her death. “It seems she was always planning for life four years down the road,” he says. One of the things 14-year-old Molly wrote in her journal was: “Being angry is a waste of time.” This is good advice from a girl who was taken from us just 4 days short of her 15th birthday. Molly's friends stop by now and then to visit the Berger household. Dan and Gail are happy to see them and happy for them. Their children will likely be the Bergers' honorary grandchildren.

Knowing Dan and what he's lived through, it only makes sense that he would want everyone to be able to look through yearbooks and stir up or keep alive their own memories. If you have a yearbook to donate, or you'd like to help Dan with this task, let us know on the alumni page of West Senior. Dan would love to show you how to sustain the keeping of memories.

West Seneca Public Library shelves with yearbooks



*Dive into
Summer Reading*

**The West Seneca CSD &
School Librarians**

present

Reading Rover



Join us for FREE Books:

July 12 Fireman's Park 12-2pm

July 14 Harlem Road Park 12-2pm

July 19 Centennial Park 12-2pm

Aug 18 Farmer's Market 4-7pm

Oct 21 West Senior Stadium 6-8pm



**Free books given to K-12 students
while supplies last**

In and Around Our Schools

Earth Day At Winchester Potters

At Winchester Potters, on a recent Friday evening, families came in to enjoy Earth Day activities that celebrated our earthly riches in music, literacy, art, and the environment!



Unified Basketball

In May, our Unified Basketball Team, composed of East and West athletes, played an exciting exhibition game vs. Frontier. Played during the school day at East Senior, families and students attended the 11:30 am game to witness the fun, good sportsmanship, and athletic prowess of both teams! West Seneca prevailed with a 61 to 25 win. Well played and well won, team!



In and Around Our Schools

School Lunch Hero Week

School Lunch Hero Week is a time when schools and community members show their appreciation for the important work that school nutrition professionals do each and every day to provide nutritious meals to the West Seneca students.

Food Service Director Sue Whalen writes the following, regarding her staff of highly appreciated heroes: School nutrition professionals have always supported student success and learning by providing nutritious meals and snacks throughout the school year. Students who eat school meals have lower rates of food insecurity, lower rates of obesity, and overall better health. Students who eat school meals have improved attendance,

behavior, academic performance, and achievement as well as decreased tardiness. Historically, child nutrition programs serve over a billion meals and snacks annually.

The past two years, school nutrition professionals were called to do more than ever before. School nutrition professionals rose to the challenge presented by COVID-19 without hesitation—adjusting meal service hours, providing home delivery and grab-and-go options, adding additional meals, and expanding service so that children from the West Seneca community continued to have dependable access to healthy food during



East Middle Lunch Heroes with Food Service Director, Sue Whalen, right

the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, more than ever, these professionals embody the essence of the word “hero.”

Sue and team have earned hero status over the last few years, more than ever!

West Middle Library Club: Buzzin’ Bees

The Buzzin’ Bees Book Club had one objective this year: Read 5 books, compete against other area middle schools and win the Battle of the Books! The books are as follows:

- *When Stars are Scattered*, by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed
- *Life As We Knew It*, by Susan Beth Pfeffer
- *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys’ Soccer Team*, by Christina Soontornvat
- *Before the Ever After*, by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Ground Zero*, by Alan Gratz

The team of 20 met with their advisor, West Middle Librarian Lydia Wrobel, Tuesdays after school (either virtually or in person) to prepare for the Battle. At the meetings, book club members had the chance to order or check out new books, interact with their peers, do various activities, and practice answering trivia questions. Now that the club has ended, students who didn’t get to read all 5 books are welcome to still borrow those titles. The Battle took place on May 5.

Congratulations to Casey Middle School of Williamsville, and all who participated! All readers are winners!



6th Grade Battle of the Books participants: Adam Staufenberger, Isabel Leydecker, Julia Buczynskyj, Jocelyn Lambe

Northwood’s Butterflies Take Wing

Northwood’s 3rd grade teachers - Mrs. Dubel, Miss Beres, Miss Kirby, and Mr. Page have been teaching their students about the lifecycle of butterflies. The students loved watching the lesson come to life! Each student received their own caterpillar, named them, and created a suitable habitat for them. The students waited patiently and journaled their observations. Once the caterpillars made their chrysalises, they were placed in a large enclosed habitat. On May 20, 3rd grade students released the butterflies into nature by the school playground. Miss Krypel’s kindergarten class joined in the fun and went out to watch the newly hatched friends flourish in their natural habitat.



Connecting with the Community

Mourning Our Losses

While we mourn in West Seneca for our Buffalo community, our hearts go out to survivors of the recent tragedy that took 10 lovely citizens. In looking for a quick way to respond, teacher Kristen Willman of West Senior writes: “Our school bookstore, that [teacher]

Rio Harden and I run, donated 100% of our sales for one day to those impacted by the tragedy in Buffalo over the weekend. Students and staff came to purchase items, as well as make cash donations, to help the cause.

Overall, we raised \$1,600. The generosity of those at West truly warmed my heart.” Proceeds went to Feed More WNY to address the food shortage caused by the closing of the Tops Market, where the crime took place.



SRO MVPs: Relationship Builders

This past April, our School Resource Officers (SRO), under the auspices of Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Dr. Sharon Loughran, presented to our Board and public viewers of the meeting. To those who may not know the scope of what our valued officer friends from the community do within our schools, there is a PowerPoint that can be accessed by clicking here. It speaks to collaboration, drills, training, education, and prevention. That, however, is merely the description of duties performed by the SROs. The real value, as stated by Board President Edmund Bedient, is the relationships the officers have built with our students. “You have to see the SROs with our students,” Bedient said. “They know their names, they have good relationships with our students. Our kids go to them, not away from them.” Bedient said he has seen an officer instantly deescalate a situation at a sporting event – not by force, but through familiarity and trust. Certainly, our SROs have embedded themselves into the school community as a source of safety and support. We find them to be our invaluable partners in education. Thank you to our unparalleled SRO team!



Officer David Jarczyk (WSR); Officer Jeremy Maloney (ESR); Officer Adam Schnitzer (EM); Dr. Sharon Loughran, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Officer David Quick (WM); Officer Michael Rybak (Elementary)

Connecting with the Community

Face2face Summit: Kids Escaping Drugs

On Thursday April 7th, 34 students from East and West Middle Schools and East and West Senior attended the Kids Escaping Drugs Face2Face Coalition Leadership Summit in Orchard Park. The mission of the Face2Face Coalition is to foster drug free communities through outreach, education and youth engagement while empowering young people to become the next generation of resilient leaders. Students participated in various sessions highlighting the consequences of drug use and ways to promote positive culture and choices within the school community. Gregory Alexandrowicz III, a senior from West, was the winner of a \$500 Milt Dickerson Memorial Character Award scholarship at the event. Gregory's nomination and award was based upon high character attributes as stated in the scholarship criteria.

Congratulations to all who attended, and special thanks to our School Social Worker

Chaperones, Dr. Christopher Scozzaro (EM), Aimee Smart (WM), Melissa Brind'Amour

(WS), Kristen Syracuse (ES), Brenna Fitzpatrick (Northwood) and Tina Schoeplin

(Clinton); along with Student Intern (Sydney Pittner). Director of Pupil Personnel Services Dr. Sharon Loughran was also a Chaperone and helped to coordinate the event.



West Middle



East Middle

Relief For Ukraine

West Elementary 4th graders recently took the initiative to start a fundraising club for the Ukraine. With very little teacher assistance, the group ran a school-wide coin drive and awareness "march." Money collected will go to the (New York State United Teachers) NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund, and West Seneca Teachers

Association (WSTA) will be asked to match donations the students are able to collect. On Friday morning, students held an awareness march from 8:45 to 9:15 during drop-off, and from 3:10 to 3:30 during pick-up. The students were safely in clear view with signs, while staff manned the parking lot. Though the plan was to collect coins from parents and grandparents,

a lot of paper money was offered – more than \$3,200! The West Seneca Teachers Association upped the amount to an even \$4,000.

The generosity is overwhelming. Our sense of community, local or worldwide, driven by our children, defines us. I am so proud of our West Elementary family for their willingness to help those in need.



Connecting with the Community

East Senior Blood Drive

Our East Senior High Student Council Officers ran a highly successful Red Cross blood drive in March. There were 4 “Double Red” donors and 35 additional units collected. Each unit saves three lives, and as an amazing bonus, currently the Red Cross tests for Covid-19 antibodies and administers that blood to Covid-19 patients, as well as immunocompromised and elderly patients! “Our East Student Council has really demonstrated major leadership post-Covid and has campaigned to make all of their events successful, including this blood drive!” says East English teacher Dyan Scritchfield.



NHS Day Of Service

On May 12th, fifteen members of West Senior’s National Honor Society spent the day cleaning Grace Guest House. Located on Seneca Street, Grace Guest House provides lodging for the families of patients receiving care in local hospitals. The NHS students cleaned every inch of the kitchen, pantries, dining room, and sitting rooms. They also washed woodwork and floors and even weeded the back garden. The students listed below participated in the Spring Day of Service, along with Patricia Carlone and Jennifer Schubring, the advisors of West Senior’s National Honor Society. Seen here are Peter Buechi, Maeve Borden, Gus Dana, Carson Guise, Liliana Hamilton, Helena Kottas, Emily Marciniak, Elizabeth Moran, Mellisa Morlock, Molly Mulderig, Kate Quinn, Shelby Snyder, Vera Stolzenberg, Jackie Supples, and Abby Wilczak. Exceptional work, student citizens!



They also washed woodwork and floors and even weeded the back garden. The students listed below participated in the Spring Day of Service, along with Patricia Carlone and Jennifer Schubring, the advisors of West Senior’s National Honor Society. Seen here are Peter Buechi, Maeve Borden, Gus Dana, Carson Guise, Liliana Hamilton, Helena Kottas, Emily Marciniak, Elizabeth Moran, Mellisa Morlock, Molly Mulderig, Kate Quinn, Shelby Snyder, Vera Stolzenberg, Jackie Supples, and Abby Wilczak. Exceptional work, student citizens!

International Relations Club Lends A Hand

On May 16th, West Senior’s International Relations Club and advisor and Spanish teacher, Laura Low, completed their 7th Home Again Project for Journey’s End Refugee Services. In the true spirit of the City of Good Neighbors, these students spent the day cleaning and setting up an apartment for a family being resettled from Syria. In years past, IRC has set up homes for families from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Sudan, Dem. Rep. Congo, and Burma. IRC is a club that offers students opportunities to celebrate their global citizenship in meaningful ways, including service to others.



Connecting with the Community



Special Olympics Torch Run

West Seneca Schools' Unified Basketball team joined with the West Seneca Police Department for the Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run this past Sunday. Jack Monson, a freshman at West Seneca East is seen here, running the torch alongside his WSPD friends. The picture below shows the entire Unified Basketball team. Good work, athletes!

Special Olympics Fundraising: East & West Middle

Special Olympics is the largest amateur sports organization in the world! There are over 31,000 Special Olympic Athletes in New York State alone, and right here in Western New York we serve over 3,000. It costs approximately \$500 to sponsor one athlete for an entire year, and thanks to the generosity and community spirit at West Seneca East and West Middle Schools, we will sponsor three local Special Olympic Athletes through a total of \$1462.50 raised! Our West Seneca Police Department also supports the Special Olympics through the Torch Run initiative that took place on Sunday, May 15, with the West Seneca Unified Basketball team! Pictured here are Mrs. Danner and her 6th grade class at East with Officer Schnitzer, and Mrs. Schunk's 8th grade class at West with Officer Quick – the top donors at their respective schools.





On My Way to K!

West Seneca Central Schools Class of 2035

Kindergarten Welcome Event

Save the Date

When: Wednesday, August 24th, 2022

Time: 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Where: Park at West Seneca West Senior High School

3330 Seneca Street West Seneca, NY 14224

Event takes place at the West Seneca Soccer Complex

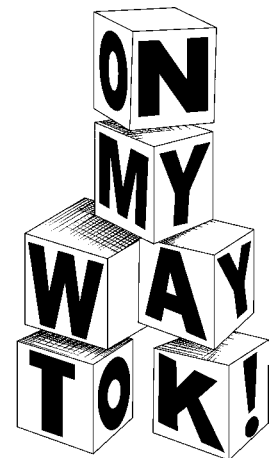
3747 Seneca Street West Seneca, NY 14224

***** Due to parking limitations, shuttles will be running from West Senior High School to the event (Soccer Complex).*****

Join us for fun and informative activities including:

- Registration
- School Bus Orientation
- Reading Rover
- Face Painting
- STEAM Activities
- Speech Activities
- UB Dental
- Car Seat Check-Up WSPD
- Food Tent

RSVP by scanning the QR Code below on your smart phone or tablet.



Athletics

Athletic Scholarships

In April, 12 of our top athletes signed with colleges and universities for a range of sports including football, rowing, lacrosse, tennis, softball and baseball. Anyone who follows West Seneca Central high school sports knows these particular scholar athletes are winners in school, in sports, and in the community. We are so proud of our athletes, coaches, and the families that dedicated themselves to making sure their athletes stayed healthy and focused. It was great to have you as part of the District teams, scholar athletes. We'll undoubtedly be reading about your achievements in the future!

EAST SENECA HIGH



Alex Rogowski
Allegheny College –
Division 3 Football



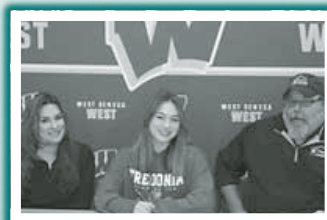
Alex Krytus
Allegheny College -
Division 3 Football



Tyler Janak
Baldwin Wallace University –
Division III Baseball



Emily Cutrona
Keuka College –
Div III Softball



Macayla Miller
Fredonia –
Division III Softball



Leah McKibbin
Buffalo State College –
Division III Lacrosse

WEST SENECA HIGH



Grace Eagen
Keuka College –
Division III Softball



Justin Piwowarczyk
SUNY @ Buffalo –
Division I Football



Brian Bork
RIT –
Division III Tennis



Chloe Wegelin
St. John Fisher College –
Division III Rowing



Alex Knowles
Alfred State –
Division III Football



Kira Grzechowiak
Buffalo State College –
Division III Lacrosse

Steven Carmina

- continued from page 1

"We chose green and gold because the Green Bay Packers were the NFL champs that year, and Trojans after the University of Southern California's football team who won the Rose Bowl in 1969 season," Carmina says. East is still identified by the green and gold and Trojans to this day.

In the spring of Carmina's junior year, without a clear idea of what he wanted to do career-wise, a classmate suggested he take a mechanical drawing class from Mr. Palumbo. Ralph Palumbo was a young teacher with a lot of energy, who taught drafting and was also a tennis and soccer coach, after being a legendary college soccer player himself.

Carmina, who grew up working alongside his father in all his typical homeowner fix-it endeavors, was inclined to understand "how things work" and took to mechanical drawing quickly. Mr. Palumbo, seeing his aptitude, told Carmina

to skip the next drawing class and go into the architecture program his senior year.

After graduating, Steve Carmina attended Buffalo State with the thought of becoming a teacher like his mentor, Mr. Palumbo. Due to the richness of his West Seneca teachers' attention, however, he says he felt bored and decided to take a gap year – before that was a popular option. After a year of bartending at Uncle Sam's, a popular area disco, Carmina went to Alfred State where he received an AAS in Architecture and then went on to the University at Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning, where he received a Bachelors in Professional Studies/Architecture.

Carmina partnered to open Carmina Silvestri in Amherst in 1990, and then in 2000 was convinced that the future of architecture was going to be in the City of Buffalo, so he opened Carmina Wood in downtown Buffalo in 2001. The company is

now Carmina Wood Morris, employing 33 people locally, and with newly established offices in Greensborough, North Carolina.

Carmina's mother still resides in West Seneca, Mr. Palumbo is doing well, and for a time, Carmina's firm maintained a scholarship in his name in the West Seneca School system. Contemporaries now, he and his former teacher are friends to this day. Carmina looks back on his years in the West Seneca Schools as a fabulous contributor during his early years. "It's a great school system," he says. "I feel like there is no one left there from my era, but it had a great influence on me, and my three sisters before me."

You're welcome back any time, Steve. Maybe there's an East Middle School Career Café in your near future for any of our budding architects who may need your inspiration!



History-Making Sports

To Coach Maurino & East & West Girls Flag Football Team, thank you for making history! West Seneca high schools make up one of 12 WNY teams that are part of a Section VI flag football pilot program this year including Buffalo Academy of Science, Niagara Falls, Sweet Home, Depew, North Tonawanda, West Seneca West, Frontier, Amherst, Iroquois, Orchard Park and Hamburg. The pilot program was approved by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association in February, which sparked great interest among our students. The Buffalo Bills are sponsoring the WNY teams. A special thanks to left tackle Dion Dawkins and cornerback Siran Neal for stopping by! This is another great idea toward sports equity, whose time has come!



West Seneca Central School District

1397 Orchard Park Road
West Seneca, NY 14224-2683

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