



# The Spartan Times



## Senior Sign-off

Overview by Sophia LaBelle

Seward is entering the final month of the school year, which means the senior Spartans are participating in their final moments leading up to and including the graduation ceremony. The class rank was released, revealing how each of them scored academically in their 4 years of high school. The top 5 includes Kendall Guerra, Stephanie Reicherter, Milo Janata, Ryan Lempka, and Derrick You.



The valedictorian of the class, Derrick You, is proud that all his efforts have gotten him where he is right now.

“Being Valedictorian represents the results of all the work and time I’ve put into school through the years,” he says. On May 1st, AKA Decision Day, the students gathered on the lawn to commemorate their plans for the future following their departure from Seward with treats and sunny weather.



On June 18th, the seniors will have their Senior Recognition Night from 6-7pm. They’ll be receiving rewards and scholarships that reflect their achievements.



Their last day of school is Thursday, June 13, where they will walk the halls of Seward one final time.

Students that choose to receive the senior blessing at the Presbyterian Church will attend the Baccalaureate on Thursday, June 27, at 7:00pm. During the event, Select Choir, as well as theatre enthusiast Eda Kelly, will be performing. Kelly will be singing *You're on Your Own, Kid* by Taylor Swift.

The graduation rehearsal is on the morning of June 26 from 11:00am-12:00pm, with their official ceremony being held on the 29th from 10:00am-11:00am. The Select Choir will be singing the National Anthem. Mr. Pascullo, the class advisor for the Class of 2024, shares his thoughts about the graduating class: "They're the first class I have had the privilege of advising all four years of their journey here at Seward. They had quite the reputation throughout their years at Golden Hill and in the Middle School, but when I met them, I found a group of students who were bright, fun, humble, and hard-working. They worked through all the challenges that were thrown at them through COVID, as well as professional and personal set-backs. I am so incredibly proud of them for having reached this moment in their lives. I can't wait to call each of their names as they walk across that stage and embark on the next chapter of their lives!"

## S.S. Seward Student Goes to States for the Civics Bee

By: Shea Fleury



This past weekend (May 30, 2024), seventh grader Sophia Arcidiacono, went to Albany to compete in the States Civics Bee. First, she wrote a five hundred word essay on a civic problem here in Florida; she chose the issue of water quality here in Florida, NY. She then became one of the twenty finalists who qualified to go to the local competition in Warwick, winning first place. From there, she went to states, competing with children from grades 6-8 all over New York State. Despite not qualifying for Nationals, she still achieved a great honor and can compete again next year. Congratulations to Sophia on this amazing accomplishment!

**Photos from the Seward Spring Concert:**



# The Spartan Theatre Players Put On Spring Cabaret: “Seward Through the Years”

by Sophia LaBelle

On June 7th, the Seward Drama Club put on their first official cabaret to keep the theater program alive during the last few months of the school year and raise money to support next year’s production.

Following *You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, the club members were initially disappointed that they’d be taking a pause till the following year, but the directors, Mrs. Ecker and Mr. Deas, had something else up their sleeves.

Mrs Ecker was so excited for the community to see what the students learned for this performance:

“We were so excited to be hosting our first annual Cabaret! With this year being the first full year of Drama Club since before the pandemic, it’s really meaningful that our theme for this year’s cabaret took us through some of the past productions that the club has put on. It will boost morale and remind community members of the great shows this club has done, and will continue to do in the future! I’m proud to say that, aside from the majority of the blocking/dancing and minor notes here and there, the students worked hard to learn their music on their own. The harmonies you heard are totally student-directed, and wow do they sound good!”

Mr. Deas has always wanted to do a cabaret since before he graduated in 2018 and couldn’t be happier that it’s finally happening:

“A cabaret has been something that has been in talks way back when I was still in school. I’m so glad that we’re finally able to hold one, not even for the aspect of having the kids being able to perform again, although that is a big part of it. But I just love the sense of community and being with the family that we’ve created throughout the months, along with having the safe space that drama creates being extended even longer!”

This will be Senior Eda Kelly’s final performance for the club. She reflects back on her time in drama:

“As a senior at Seward, leaving my family in the Drama Club is something that is very bittersweet. When the idea of a cabaret was suggested I got very excited to get to perform with my friends one last time. This club is such an important part of why I’m majoring in theater when I go to college in the fall. It gave me a love of performing and entertaining, and a group of people that I will now be bonded with for the rest of my life. I can’t wait to return for future shows and see what Mrs. Ecker and Mr. Deas have up their sleeves!!”



# Varsity Girls Lacrosse

By: Shea Fleury

The Chester and Seward Girls Lacrosse Team, coached by Rob Alonso, just finished their third season playing as a combined team earlier this May. After countless hours of hard work and dedication building the team, they were able to play as a first year varsity team this past season. Despite the losses, the girls never failed to show up and put up a fight at every single game. The future is bright for the team as a whole, as well as the five amazing seniors (Jaleen Ruiz, Isabel Valasquez, Abigail Thonus, Angalee Hernandez, and Haley Edwards) who were celebrated at their senior night against Burke (winning 14-4) on May 8. Senior Jaleen Ruiz will also be continuing her lacrosse career at University of Hartford. We can't wait to see what the team and our seniors do in the years to come.



Senior Jaleen Ruiz set to play College Girls Lacrosse at University of Hartford



Varsity Girls Lacrosse Team

# Career Day and Cemetery Sophomore Trip

Overview by Sophia LaBelle

Pictures by Sophia LaBelle, Mrs. Moon, Mrs. Schiebling

On April 17, the sophomores spent the day participating in many events that tied into what they have learned and experienced this year, as well as helping them prepare for the future.

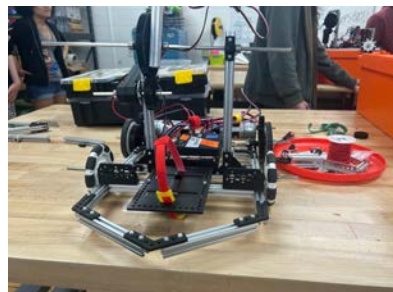
First, they visited Warwick Valley High School, where they toured some of the specific programs the school offers. These programs are similar to the programs offered at BOCES, which eligible juniors can take advantage of here through Seward. The main focus of the day was an annual career fair at Warwick High School, which was organized by a committee from Warwick H.S. in collaboration with Ms. Scheibling. The purpose of the career fair is to get personal information about jobs that students are interested in from people in those actual careers and fields. This career fair compliments the career workshops done in December with Mrs. Scheibling in the sophomores' English class. Mrs. Scheibling said that "The career fair event compliments the career workshops that the Sophomores experience in December. It allows students to explore interests with professionals in our community."

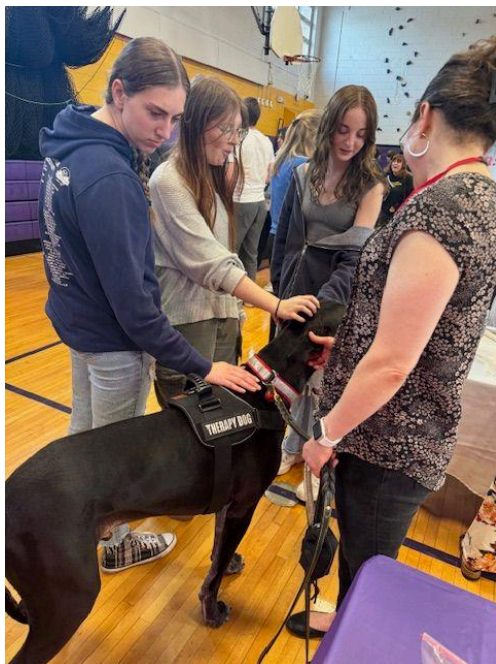
Then the sophomore class visited the Warwick Town Park for lunch and took some time to act like kids again on the playground.

After the park, they visited Beth Shalom Cemetery and took part in a presentation given by Mr. Michael Melasky, one of the caretakers, where students learned about information surrounding the cemetery's history and how it carries itself today. He then gave them time to participate in one of the traditions honored there - placing rocks on graves to commemorate the dead.

The field trip was an amazing experience to learn more about ourselves and the people in our community!

Photos from the Sophomore field trip:



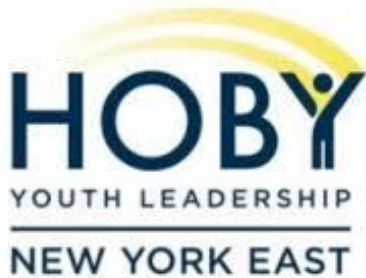


# 2024 HOBY Candidates from S.S. Seward

By Cricket Carey

The Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Foundation, often shortened to HOBY, is a special program that happens once a year. Between one and four selected Sophomores from participating school districts in a certain state (or part of a state) are sent to take part in a three day seminar where they learn how to harness their outstanding leadership skills and use them to do great things in the future. These students, called Ambassadors, get to meet all the other chosen students in their region and learn countless new skills and life lessons together. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity that few people are fortunate enough to participate in.

S.S. Seward is one school that participates in HOBY. Orange County is part of the HOBY New York East region. In 2022, Seward nominated Milo Janata and Autumn Gandolfo to participate in the seminar. Last year, the newspaper and literary magazine club’s very own Malina Grove, alongside myself were chosen. And now this year, HOBY will be welcoming Tahnia-Marie Rucker and Autumn Montanez! Congratulations to both of you, and good luck at the seminar. This is a huge opportunity that you’re incredibly lucky to have!





# **The S.S. Seward PTSA Annual Tricky Tray**

By: Sierra Grove, Georgia Maesano, & Ava Andrade

On Saturday, April 1, the S.S. Seward PTSA held its annual Tricky Tray event in the gymnasium. Many people from the community came to partake in betting on the baskets. Two food trucks were hired to provide food and refreshments for the visitors. In addition to the food truck, the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors sold concessions to raise money for their classes. There were over 300 baskets ranging from toys to television sets! Many local businesses donated prizes as well, including Rookie's, Copper Bottom, and Werner's Ace Hardware. On top of that, tickets for the 50/50 Raffle were also sold. The lucky winner received \$1,331! Dr. Spindler and other members of the Board of Education took on the role of calling the winning ticket numbers. Some of the students from S. S. Seward were also able to gain community service hours by running the baskets to the winners and helping to set up the event with the PTSA. Each year, there is generally a great turnout! This year, tickets were also sold online as opposed to just purchasing the tickets with money in person. This allowed the PTSA to be even more successful in pre-sales! Thank you to all those who attended and volunteered!

## **Budget Night At S.S. Seward**

By Malina Grove

On Tuesday, May 21, Seward hosted its annual budget night, during which members of the community were invited to the school to cast their votes for the school budget and for open positions on the school board. The S.S. Seward PTSA donated and served ice cream to the community, and various clubs and organizations had displays inside the building. Artwork created by students of the Florida School District was also featured, as well as a Silly Sing Along by students of Golden Hill.

The following day it was announced that the budget passed with 341 votes. The two open Board of Education seats were filled by Robert J. Scheuerman, who was running for reelection, and Virginia Moore-Stam.



# Best Small Hudson Valley Bands Who YOU Should Know About

By Cricket Carey

## #6: Midnight Driver

**BIO:** Midnight Driver is an alternative rock band from New York and Boston. Having been founded just recently in late 2020, this band is slowly rising in popularity throughout the Hudson Valley and beyond. Their music is very unique, with the way it sounds so futuristic but also retro. This band plays shows very frequently at all different types of events throughout multiple Northeastern states.

**MY REVIEW:** I have yet to see Midnight Driver live in concert, but I have heard some of their music before, and I really enjoy it. As of right now they have one single out on music streaming services, called “Dial Tone.” It has a very retro feel with strong electronica and new wave influences. I also love the voice of their lead singer, Donovan Teeple. It’s very smooth and relaxing. However, I do want to quickly point out that (at least on Spotify) there are multiple artists under the name Midnight Driver. Be sure you find and listen to the right one!

**WHERE TO CATCH THEM NEXT:** Midnight Driver has one show coming up on May 3rd at The Delancey nightclub in New York City, playing with four other bands! Admission is \$10 and the event starts at 5:00 PM. Be sure to go out and support these great New York acts!



# Autism Acceptance Month

By Cricket Carey

Just about every month of the year has something different it celebrates, in fact some months commemorate multiple things. April can be celebrated as national poetry month, national stress awareness month, and more! Among this list is Autism acceptance month, and in this article I'm going to explain to you why it's extremely important to help spread the word and become a better ally to autistic people this month and onward.

Autism can be defined as "a neurodevelopmental condition of variable severity with lifelong effects that can be recognized from early childhood, chiefly characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behavior" (Oxford Dictionary). It's not a disorder, nor is it the same case in every autistic individual. People call it a spectrum for a reason; it's because every person with autism is completely unique, just like the rest of us! Some autistic people have a hard time socializing and making friends, but some are great at it. Some can speak, some are nonverbal. Some struggle academically, others get straight A's in school. And the list goes on!

Autism has been seen as taboo or something you should be ashamed of for decades, and before then, autistic people were just viewed as "weird" or "defective," among other vulgar insults. And unfortunately, the way people with autism are treated to this day is still less than great. We've certainly come a long way in the way our society has learned to treat each other, but there's still work that needs to be done. All the bullying and teasing that autistic people receive on a daily basis is immeasurable, and needs to be stopped. And the bullying itself isn't even always done by kids; there are grown adults out there who feel it's okay to push people down just because their brain works a little differently.

There's also an extensive history of autistic people being treated inhumanely in schools as far back as education goes, but that's a story for another article. I'll summarize it here by saying that to this day, neurodivergent students still struggle to obtain accommodations to help them learn and grow along with the rest of us. Abuse, neglect, and informal removals happen silently but rampantly throughout school districts all over the United States.

So, I've made it apparent that autistic people are treated awfully, more often than not. Now what?

Now you can become a better ally for neurodivergent people! It's really not that hard, just treat them with the same respect and kindness that you would for anyone else. We're all human beings, after all. We all have our challenges, and you never know who's dealing with what. Whenever somebody, autistic or not, asks you for help with something, try and find a way to help them. Whenever somebody needs you to teach them something, teach them, to the best of your ability. It's our job as a society to help those who need it.

(Article continued on next page)



And it's worth quickly mentioning that the truest form of allyship takes place with the ally standing next to or behind the group they're supporting, not in front of them. There are far too many people, especially caretakers, out there who take way too much pride in just doing the bare minimum. Celebrate the ones you love, not just yourself. Because helping those who need it is how we can achieve justice as a society.



## **A Message From The Spartan Times**

By Malina Grove

As this is the last issue of The Spartan Times for the 2023-2024 school year, I would like to take some time to thank a few people who have made the Newspaper Club possible this year. On behalf of the club, I would like to give a big thank you to our advisor, Mrs. Moon, who has provided guidance and advice, without which this newspaper would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the Tech and Communications Department at S.S. Seward for helping us to make The Spartan Times available to be read on the website for the very first time this year! From the beginning of this year it has been a goal of the club to be able to reach a wider audience with our publication, and we are grateful for the help in making this a reality. Last but not least, I would like to give a special thanks to you, our readers. Simply by reading this, you are supporting our club and the hard work of our members. Thank you very much, and stay tuned for more from The Spartan Times in the 2024-2025 school year!

Sincerely,

Malina Grove

President of the Newspaper Club at S.S. Seward

## **Our Mission:**

To inform, entertain, and keep our audience well versed in the happenings of S.S. Seward Institute. We strive to be reliable, original, impartial, and compassionate to all who choose to immerse themselves in our school's culture. We abide by the same high standards that any other newspaper would, ranging from *The Florida Focus* to *The New York Times*. If there are any questions regarding our newspaper or our intent, please contact any of our officers or our advisor.

***The Spartan Times* is produced by the S.S. Seward School Newspaper Club and advised by Mrs. Moon.**

**This issue was contributed to by:  
Cricket Carey, Sophia LaBelle, Shea Fleury, Sierra Grove, Ava Andrade,  
Georgia Maesano, and Malina Grove**



# **The Spartan Times**



## **2023=2024**