

# General Quarters

Salem Central School

9/9/2019

Edition 2, Volume 1

## Welcome Back!

Welcome Back!

It's been great catching up with everyone on your summer and watching everyone get started with the 2019-2020 school year. While there are a couple of challenges we need to meet, you've had a great start to the school year. I'm looking forward to our work this year.

And we have a great deal of work to do. The main focus of this newsletter is to catch you up on what's been happening over the summer and some of the changes for this school year.

### Clocks

They are coming! The State approved the work over the summer. We've processed the paperwork to purchase the clocks and expect them to arrive sometime this month. All of the clocks are wireless, so installation basically involves setting up the system controls, putting batteries into the clocks, and hanging them on the walls. Some of the clocks will be temporarily placed pending the work on the building project later this school year but we should have operational clocks back this fall! Thanks for your patience, and good sense of humor, as we worked through the inconvenience.



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## *Building Project*

The building project was submitted to the State Education Department for their review this summer. Since, it has gone through a number of preliminary reviews and now is in the queue for mechanical and architectural approvals. The wait time has decreased dramatically since we first started the project. We anticipate approvals to be completed sometime this fall and putting the project out for bid by the holidays. Once we open bids on the project, we will be able to start the work.

The work is planned to start this school year and last into the summer for 2021. We are having meetings now to work out the last minute details on the project prior to the work going out to bid. This work includes the pacing and 'phasing' of the project. Said differently, we're trying to decide the best approach on what to do first, and at what time. Given the amount of work we are doing in the project, this is a bit of a heavy-lift.

Making this heavier is the asbestos concerns in the project. The 1938 portion of the building has asbestos throughout the building. The 1954 and 1968 portions contain asbestos too but it is not as prevalent. Fortunately, the 1999 portion of the building is asbestos free. Unfortunately, the amount of work we are doing will require us to do a large amount of abatement in this project.

With the volume of abatement work that needs to be done, the sooner we can get out of the contractors' way, the faster we can get construction work underway and completed. To this end, you may have heard (or I'm might discussed with you) the likelihood of room changes to take place this school year to allow us to temporarily vacate the primary building. While this is a strong possibility, it is not fully decided at this point. We should know more in a week or so. Once we determine that we need to move forward, we'll let you know and communicate plans on how we'll likely proceed.

While the work we are doing is exciting and will be a real benefit to the district, it will be uncomfortable for a little while. However, I'm confident that the end result will be worth it. Thank you in advance for your understanding, cooperation, and perseverance in the next phase of the project.

## *Smart School Bond Funding*

Thank you for your participation on the computer use survey. We used this information to complete our budget plan for the Smart School Bond Funding. We held a public hearing on the plan this summer and plan to have the board approve the plan in September, after the required 30-day comment period is completed. Once approved, we'll submit the paperwork to the State for approval. We expect a wait time of about one year before we can start to purchase the new equipment, which will work well with the phasing of the building project. The funding plan may be found [here](#).

The project is going to look a little different than we last discussed. Because of the volume of interest in the Chrome platform, we are changing from cart-based implementation to a 1:1 initiative. It will be more cost effective, but require some additional supports and regulations on our end to make everything work. Because of the split interest between the SMART and Promethean board, we may go with both boards

rather than choosing just one. Phasing will look a little different too and will be based on fund availability and status of the building project. However, we anticipate that the Chromebooks will come first.

In the meantime, we are bringing in new Chromebook carts to keep the rotation in place. We're also replacing teacher computers. This will mark the replacement of nearly every computer in the district over the past five years.

## *School Safety*

There is no time like the present to review fire exits and safety drill expectations with your students. We need to complete 8 drills (fire and/or lock down) before Christmas. We will start soon! (wink, wink) If you are lacking safety information (lock down procedures, etc.) please let your administrative office know. And fair warning, we will be doing lockdown drills during inconvenient times this year.

There is still room on the Safety Committee for anyone who is interested. We are meeting during the school day a couple of times during the school year to discuss some changes to our safety procedures, including the "run, hide, fight" concept, covering of classroom windows, safety procedures at night and on our school busses. If you have interest in participating, please let my office know.

## *School Messenger*

If you haven't done so already, please be sure to get your yellow cards into Maura. We'll use this information to update the automated calling system for this school year. Once we have everything updated, we'll send you a test message to make sure everything works.

We plan on expanding the use of this tool for the upcoming school year. While it will still be used for emergency situations and school closings, we also plan to keep the community informed of school events (e.g. concerts, performances, etc.). This is part of our effort to be more proactive in our communications with our community.

## *Public Relations / Webpage*

You all do great things in your classroom. Please be sure to share it with us so we can share it with the community. If you have something specific occurring, please let your principal know so we can make arrangements to have Amy come to take pictures, etc. The more you share, the more our community can see the great things that we do every day!

Similarly, please be sure to keep your teacher page updated on the school website. Our website is only as good as the information that we keep on it so please keep things updated early and often. Please reach out to Randy or Todd for help. Soon, we'll be looking at a new web platform that will better work with social media, etc. Details to follow!

## *District Goals*

Over the summer the Board of Education approved the following goals and priorities for the school district. Please take some time to review this information. Your principals will be working with the Building Leadership and Planning Teams on how to achieve these goals at the building level.

**Academic Success - Provide a comprehensive and rigorous academic program that supports and develops the whole child so he/she are prepared to graduate and become productive and responsible citizens.**

- Support for faculty, staff, and administration
- Implement Next Generation Standards
- Increase the graduation rate
- Response to Intervention (RtI)

**Culture and Climate - Establish a safe, positive, and respectful learning environment that celebrates student growth, success, and diversity.**

- Empower students to engage in positive activities/conversations
- Include staff/students in decision-making process
- Support shared-decision making teams with the district
- Restorative Justice

**Human Resources - Attract and retain high quality faculty and staff who are dedicated to the success of all students.**

- Review of vetting/hiring process
- Onboarding of new faculty and staff
- Establish exit interview policy
- Professional Development

**Health and Safety - Deploy resources and implement program to provide a safe and supportive school community environment focused on teaching and learning.**

- Provide preventative programs to address dangerous behaviors including but not limited to alcohol/drug use and bullying
- Continue to plan to harden building entrances
- Increase access to mental health service options for any students in need.

**Communication - Develop and maintain a proactive communication plan that increases district transparency, provides timely information, and promotes open dialogue with all stakeholders.**

- Website
- Social Media

## Combined Faculty Meetings

In an effort to complete all the training that we are required to accomplish, we have dedicated one Monday a month for a joint-faculty meeting to complete training or share/discuss issues of importance for the district. Below is the planned meeting dates, times, and topics for the 2019-2020 school year.

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter
September 30, 2019	2:35	Sexual Harassment	BOCES Staff
October 28, 2019	2:35	Safety: Incident Prevention and Response	NYS Troopers
November 25, 2019	2:35	Mental Health/Suicide Prevention	Washington County Council of Prevention
December	NO	MEETING	BREAK
January 27, 2020	2:35	ESSA	TBD
February 24, 2020	2:35	School Climate	TBD
March 30, 2020	2:35	State Testing Administration	BOCES Staff
April 27, 2020	2:35	School Climate	TBD
May	NO	MEETING	BREAK
June 22, 2020	2:35	Celebrations	Staff

## Information from the Open

Below is a list of links of information used in the opening presentation along with some web resources that you might find useful in our conversation about equity and school climate. I appreciate the feedback that I've received from you since our open and look forward to tackling this challenge together.

### Links from the Opening Presentation

**They covered their school in racist graffiti. They apologized. But will they change? from The Washington Post**

[https://wapo.st/teenhatecrime?tid=ss\\_mail](https://wapo.st/teenhatecrime?tid=ss_mail)

[https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEU\\_enUS821US822&ei=DxpTXcewBoKw\\_Qb3gaaQAQ&q=they+covered+their+school+in+racist+graffiti&oq=they+covered+their+school+in+racist+graffiti&gs\\_l=psy-ab.3...16622.33236..33611...3.0..0.154.3877.41j6.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0j0i131j0i67j0i131i67j0i10j0i22i30j0i13j0i13i30j0i13i5i30j33i160.s6S\\_r6klik&ved=0ahUKewiH9IPD1IDkAhUCWN8KHfeACRIQ4dUDCAo&uact=5](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEU_enUS821US822&ei=DxpTXcewBoKw_Qb3gaaQAQ&q=they+covered+their+school+in+racist+graffiti&oq=they+covered+their+school+in+racist+graffiti&gs_l=psy-ab.3...16622.33236..33611...3.0..0.154.3877.41j6.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0j0i131j0i67j0i131i67j0i10j0i22i30j0i13j0i13i30j0i13i5i30j33i160.s6S_r6klik&ved=0ahUKewiH9IPD1IDkAhUCWN8KHfeACRIQ4dUDCAo&uact=5)

**Life of Privilege Explained in a \$100 Race**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps>

## Some Curriculum Resource Links

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/hate-in-schools.html>

<https://www.tolerance.org/topics>

<http://www.project1619.org/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/08/28/historians-slavery-myths/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked.html>

## *Student Privacy – 2D Law*

Last year, we gave everyone a heads up on some new regulations on protecting student data; specifically Personally Identifiable Information (PII). With some changes at State Ed, there's been some delay to its implementation. However, it's still a good time of year to review the pending changes to be mindful of guarding our student data in any programs that you might use.

You can find a good summary of the law's requirements [here](#). This is the parent information sheet that outlines each aspect of the new law. Our biggest challenge is going to be the use of programs that aren't either vetted by NERIC, BOCES, or the District as each software program we use is required to meeting these new regulations before we can use them. More information and changes will follow soon.

## *A Little History about SWA*

This summer Al Cormier held a presentation about the construction of our school building back in 1938. He's written a brief historical piece about the property before it became our school, which is re-printed here with permission. If you missed the presentation, he will be hosting a second talk/slide show on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm in the Courthouse. It was well attended in the summer. Please take the opportunity, if you're able, to take advantage of the second opportunity!

The Gray Man's Legacy  
Salem, New York  
By Al Cormier

Recently I gave a talk about the building of the 1938 Salem Washington Academy on the former General John Williams estate on East Broadway. The groundwork for the new building to happen actually took place over many years, and the prequel to this talk is as follows.

Beginning in the late 1700's, the General John Williams family was the most prominent and wealthy family in Salem, helping to build the second Salem Washington Academy in 1794 on East

Broadway and later the brick academy on West Broadway. Other family ventures were a grist mill, a saw mill, an iron smelting plant, a local canal system for water power, a machine shop in which fire engines of the day were built, and a new brick fire house. On a larger scale, the Williams family promoted the building of the Salem and the Whitehall Presbyterian churches, the 1869 Washington County Courthouse and Jail in Salem, and the building of the Champlain Canal, the latter not being built until 1819. Intellectually, General John Williams provided, in addition to his leadership in the Revolutionary War, his skills as a trained surgeon and physician, and his political savvy at the local, county, state and federal levels. As a New York State Constitutional Delegate in 1788 he helped to form the United States Constitution, promoting state's rights—resulting in today's Bill of Rights.

The General's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren preserved the artistic and historical aspects of community life in their letters, historical writings and books of the times into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Following in his father's footsteps, son John Jr. continued the family military heritage as a Colonel in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the New York State Cavalry. Great-grandson John Martin Williams carried on the family's philosophical and financial support for town and county projects, primarily the red brick fire house and the Salem county courthouse and jail. His sister Harriet Martin Williams adeptly captured events of the day in *The Salem Book*, 1896, and other small books detailing nature and the lasting spiritual impact of her great-grandfather in *The Gray Man*.

The last survivor of the Williams' family, great-great granddaughter Marion Williams was no less benevolent. In 1875, she funded the Marion Hose Company, No. 2 that was named for her. On June 21, 1899 she married popular Congressman James Southworth Parker and they ran the Williams family estate, the Congressman raising dairy cows and breeding harness racing horses in addition to his Congressional responsibilities. He trained his horses east of the mansion on the Salem Driving Park located on the south side of East Broadway. Before Marion died in 1923, she must have instilled in her Congressman husband the Williams penchant for education and community service, and evidently her influence remained with him during his second marriage to Amy Gardiner Glidden.

When Congressman Parker died in 1933, he adhered to Marion's wishes, his last will and testament directing that the Williams mansion on the 15 acre estate be offered to the school district for \$8,000. The mansion remained empty for the following two years after his death until his second wife Amy Gardiner Glidden carried out his wishes. In 1935, the school board put the generous offer to "public vote and it passed by a ratio of sixteen to one," and in 1937, after a Public Works Administration grant of \$200,250 in August and then a positive vote on November 3 to centralize, the new school district and the building project became a reality.

Today, visitors to the existing Salem Central School often comment, not only about the colonial style school architecture itself, but about the beautiful campus with its well-kept expansive lawns and many trees, the result of the Williams family respect for architecture and nature.

Not only did General John Williams have an eye for architecture, the original house reflecting the English Georgian style, but for flora and fauna. In particular, flowers and trees embellished the estate throughout successive Williams' generations. A 1936 demolition blueprint, done by Carl W. Clark Architect of Cortland, New York, shows all the buildings, trees and walkways of the estate. The mansion was fronted by a "high piazza," and in the "rear a second veranda" leading to a porte cochere where horse

driven carriages, and later automobiles, accepted and disembarked their passengers, many of them notable military officers, politicians, scientists, scholars, religious leaders, suffragettes, and artists. A driveway circled from the front to the rear of the house and back out to East Broadway. A gravel path to the front entrance of the house ran from a slate flagstone sidewalk in front of the mansion – the flag stone eventually being replaced by a cement sidewalk built by A. L. Hubby who signed and dated his work, October 5, 1939, in one of the wet concrete pads in front of the new school.

Such a large estate required numerous support buildings for humans and animals and a large local staff to maintain the buildings and grounds, including servants for the house. The out buildings were an office for Congressman Parker, a large garage, a cow barn, an ice house, a horse barn, a harness shop, a blacksmith shop, a chicken coop, a work shop, a pump house, a wash shed on the creek that ran through the property, and an underground septic system for the in house plumbing system. Also noted for human needs were a water well served by a water pump and pressure tank in the basement. Water for animals and numerous gardens came from a small creek north of the house; the creek with its own water pump and pressure tank and water tower served hot bed houses for seedlings, and a fenced in area for vegetable gardens. Listed on the blue print are trees that embellished the grounds. The blue print also showed that the north part of the property was fenced off for a pasture, most likely for Parker's racing horses.

In 1936, a total of 112 trees, each identified by a number and its condition on the blue print, had been planted over the years by the Williams family. Tree varieties identified were spruce, maple, soft maple, elms, red pine, ash, hemlock, and locust. The locust trees fronted the mansion, and later the school, until removed and replaced by soft maples in 1974. A spruce hedge was planted along the banks of the east to west running creek north of the house, the small creek eventually crossing under North Main Street and via storm drainage tubes and well-built slate storm channels emptying into West Beaver Brook. (Part of this elaborate slate storm drainage system coming from the north end of the old village exists under the lawn of Carl Shaw's house on Vail Street as well as remnants of the drain channel to the west of the A and J Enterprises before joining the storm system that ran under North Main Street and Railroad Street.) Few of the original spruce trees remain today, and the estate creek has been filled in. Although most of the 1936 trees identified are gone, the school board over the years planted new trees, continuing the Williams' tree tradition.

Indeed the Williams family love for nature and aesthetics paved the way for the current school building and beautiful grounds that people admire today. Day in and day out the spirit of the Gray Man continues to impact all who visit the school and campus.

Sources:

General John Williams family genealogy, Salem archives.

*History of Washington Academy, 1780-1980*, Telegraphic, Edie Baldwin Meikle and Judith Irwin Flagg,

The Telescope Folding Furniture Co., Inc. Granville, New York, 1980.

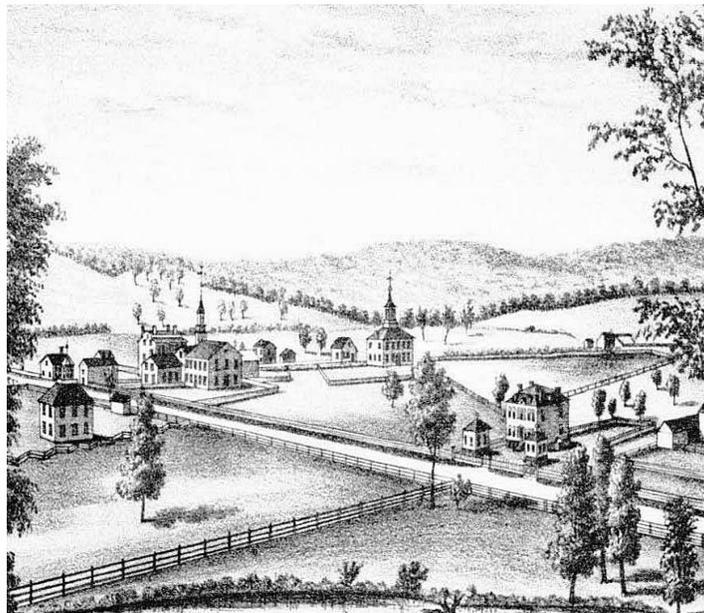
*History of Washington Co., New York*, Crisfield Johnson, Everts & Ensign, Philadelphia, 1878.

*The History of Salem, 1764-1976*, Winston Adler, Dr. Asa Fitch Jr. Historical Society, 1976.

Interview with Robert Cormier, the slate storm channel west of A and J Enterprises, September 1, 2019.

*The Washington Academy*, Tobias Wright, Printer and Publisher, New York, 1915.

“Topographical Sketch of New High School Site at Salem, NY, “ Carl W. Clark Architect, 1936.



The General John Williams Mansion in 1793 is on the Right  
by Thomas Barrow

### Mission

**Maintain a supportive and caring learning environment for the students of Salem, Rupert, and the surrounding area that creates opportunities for students both before and after graduation, promotes student success through a focused, intentional academic program, and engenders a sense of service to both school and community.**