

## SOMERS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

### *Newsire*

Spring 2005

[www.sefny.org](http://www.sefny.org)

### TEN GRANTS GIVEN

SEF recently awarded ten grants totaling over \$20,000. SEF has distributed more than 140 grants totaling nearly \$200,000 since being founded in 1994. Here is the latest (applicants are teachers unless otherwise noted):

#### *Primrose Elementary School*

**Stacey Elconin** received a grant to enable noted author Carolyn Lesser to be “in residence” for one week. She held sessions with students in all grades to help them define and improve their writing skills, and also met with teachers and parents to help them encourage the children with their writing development.

#### *Somers Intermediate School*

**Grace Ostermann** and **Carol Haber-Cohen** were awarded a grant to help sponsor the annual Author’s Day, specifically the appearance of Gail Carson

Levine, a contemporary author known for her novel *Ella Enchanted*. SEF made the grant in honor of **Kay Staplin**, SEF vice president, who taught at SIS for 34 years and was a longtime organizer of the event.

#### *Somers Middle School*

**Christina Sweeney** was awarded a grant to cover a presentation of “The Right to Dream,” which blended video, audio, discussion and live performances by an actor. The content was focused on the struggle for civil rights in the South and supported the students’ study of the book *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

**Suzanne Rossini** received a grant for her choir students to attend a workshop with the music director of the Broadway hit “Hairspray,” where they learned about musical coaching and experienced an actual performance rehearsal. Transportation to Manhattan was also included in the grant. Rossini received a separate grant to upgrade the technology she uses to instruct her students.

**Cathy Gelman** received a grant for a “Swapping Stories” intergenerational program. A consultant trained 20 students and 20 local senior citizens (along with several teachers) in the art of sharing their life stories with each other. The stories were videotaped for viewing and future additional training.

Student **Gabrielle Gordon** was awarded a grant for tuition assistance to attend the Junior National Young Leaders

Conference, where she will learn techniques for effective leadership while studying U.S. history.

#### *Somers High School*

**Sharon Wiggins** received a grant to purchase “SmartBoard” interactive whiteboard technology to use in her English classes. “SmartBoard” is a touch-sensitive screen that works in conjunction with a computer and projector and creates a dynamic, interactive learning environment.

**Cheryl Tahan** was awarded a grant to purchase cardio kickboxing bags for use in the physical education program.

**Amy Banino** received a grant to send four students to a summer “yearbook camp” in Pennsylvania, where they will receive training in all facets of yearbook publishing.

*Somers Education Foundation welcomes grant applications throughout the school year. Applications are available at [www.sefny.org](http://www.sefny.org) or at the district office.*

### SEF EVENTS RECAP

#### *VARIETY SHOW: GREAT TALENT*

The annual SEF Variety Show on January 21 was larger than ever, drawing 37 wide-ranging acts involving more than 75 talented performers. Comedy, plate-spinning, (*see page 2*)

(*variety continued*) instrument playing, hula-hooping, karate and many singing and dancing styles were represented. The audience of more than 500 was treated to an evening of extraordinary entertainment. Special thanks to emcees **Arthur Tisi, Steve Matson and Vinny Pizzimenti** and to sound and lighting experts **Jackie Wolk and Henning Haggblom**.

### WINE TASTING: DELIGHTING THE PALATE

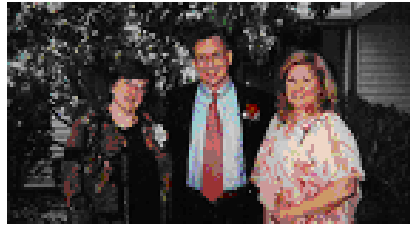
More than 50 Somers residents attended the SEF's annual wine tasting party March 9 at Traditions Restaurant. They enjoyed a variety of red and white wine specialties, and learned a great deal thanks to the expertise provided by Sterling Cellars. Thanks to everyone who supported this event and to Traditions proprietor **Lisa Lubeck** for providing the setting and food.

### GALA DINNER: HALL OF FAMERS INDUCTED

Three exceptional contributors to the success of the Somers Central School District were inducted into the SEF Hall of Fame at the annual Gala Dinner and Silent Auction on May 7 at Pinnacle Restaurant in Somers. Nearly 100 people attended.

The honorees included **Sharon Leighton**, a longtime SHS teacher; **Michael McAnaw**, current president of the Somers Chamber of Commerce; and **Valerie Pascale**, a current

member and former president of the Somers Board of Education.



*Honorees Valerie Pascale, Michael McAnaw and Sharon Leighton.*

They each received a silver plaque and were presented proclamations by State Senator Vincent Leibell and Westchester County Legislator Michael Kaplowitz, who also proclaimed a day of honor for each of them.

Leighton, a Somers teacher since 1973, is the coordinator of the SHS Family and Consumer Science Department, and the founder and advisor for the Tusker Tots program, in which her students work closely with four-year-olds.

McAnaw, who has had a 25-year career in finance and is currently an investment advisor for Edward Jones in Somers, has been the Chamber's president since 2001. A father of two SMS students and a former SEF trustee, he has



*Westchester County Legislator Michael Kaplowitz presents Michael McAnaw with proclamation.*

strongly supported the school district through his Chamber position.

In addition to her Board of Education responsibilities over many years, Pascale, a Somers parent, is a former longtime SEF trustee and has been a strong organizer and supporter of SEF's fundraising activities.

### MAGICMASTERS BASKETBALL

Two basketball games featuring the Harlem MagicMasters versus the Somers MagicBusters (teachers, administrators and students) were enjoyed by more than 700 residents at Somers High School on May 20.



*The Somers MagicBusters had fun keeping pace with the Harlem MagicMasters.*

The MagicMasters provided plenty of antics as well as pinpoint shooting accuracy while the MagicBusters held their own despite little time to practice together before the doubleheader, which was co-sponsored by SEF and Citibank. The final scores were not as important as the sense of community and the fun this event always generates. Thanks to everyone for their participation and ongoing support of this Somers tradition!

## FOLEY GIVEN AWARD

SEF Community Liaison (and co-founder) **Marilyn Foley** was honored in February by the Somers Rotary Club. At a Pinnacle Restaurant dinner, she received the “Service Above Self” award for her many contributions to the community. Congratulations, Marilyn!

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS DONATE

SEF appreciates the generous support it continues to receive from many local businesses, which helps fund the innovative grants we award teachers and students. Recent benefactors include the **Louis R. Cappelli Foundation** for an English Language Learners program at Primrose; **Gary Parker** of Houlihan Lawrence in Somers for equipment for the SMS music department; **Sammel Architecture** for a playwriting workshop at SHS; **Somers Manor Nursing Home** for a “writing with symbols” program at Primrose; and **Aries Automotive** for a Jeopardy! math game at SMS.

We welcome others who would like to join our more than 75 community partners. Interested businesses can make donations to fund specific grants or to support the general grant fund.

For more information on becoming a community partner, contact Community Liaison **Marilyn Foley** at [www.sefny.org](http://www.sefny.org).

## AUTHORS’ DAY A HIT

A half-dozen authors and illustrators visited SIS on May 13 for the annual Authors’ Day event, partially funded by an SEF grant. They spent time discussing their careers, reading and displaying their works and giving students tips on how to improve their writing skills.



*Author Gail Carson Levine with students Polly Brodsky and Andi Culver.*

## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Each spring SEF awards EXCEL scholarships to several graduating SHS seniors who demonstrate “excellent character and exemplary leadership.” This year’s winners are **William Bishop, Amy Bonanno** and **Zoe Elmore**.

## PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Are We There Yet? A favorite question from the backseats of SUVs everywhere. Are We There Yet? It’s also the question that SEF Trustees ask of ourselves as we close out this year, our 10th, of providing financial support and community events for the Somers Central School District.

Are We There Yet? Have we created a flawless process here to ensure that all teachers’ innovative curriculum enhancements are sponsored by funds that flow effortlessly into and through our organization? Hardly. Each one of our trustees has the calluses, scrapes and bruises that go along with any truly rewarding labor. But we have some amazing experiences to match. We’ve seen the children learn through hands-on, interactive programs, innovative technologies, and life-changing experiences, thanks to teachers who discover new ways of making learning exhilarating, and a community that financially and enthusiastically supports SEF’s efforts, so that we can make it happen.

Are We There Yet? While the journey is far from over, and a tangible destination may seem as distant as it was ten years ago, the process is what matters most, and seeing the light in the eyes of our Somers children experiencing these learning innovations tells me “We’re Here!”

On behalf of all the SEF trustees, thank you for helping us make these dreams become reality, and we encourage you to consider doing more. We are always looking for eager volunteers for a single event or to join our Board of Trustees... consider joining us. You’ll be glad you did! In the meantime, we hope you all have a safe and happy summer holiday!

*-Sarena Meyer*



**SOMERS  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**

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**SUPPORT SEF**

SEF, established in 1994, is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization comprised of parents, school representatives and community members. SEF supports Somers schools by raising funds for specific student and teacher-initiated projects that enrich the educational experience and are not funded by the school budget or school groups. Please consider making a donation to support our efforts. If your company has a matching grants or community support program, we can further leverage your donation. Send to:

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