

around the VALLEY

DECEMBER 2018



929 lakeshore drive
leesport PA 19533-8631

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

WELCOME to our new teachers and staff



Left to right: **Mrs. Stephanie Burkart**, high school counselor; **Mr. Micah Storms**, 3rd grade long-term substitute; **Miss Liana Watson**, elementary school speech and language therapist; **Mr. Matthew Wisotsky**, high school math teacher; **Mrs. Melanie Leroy**, 1st grade teacher; **Miss Kaitlyn Boyle**, 8th grade English language arts teacher; **Ms. Ginger Thomas**, 7th grade science teacher; **Mrs. Tiffany Tyler**, 5th and 6th grade long-term substitute school counselor; **Mrs. Alia Emery**, elementary school discovery learning teacher; **Mr. Ean Costenbader**, middle school autistic support; **Mrs. Kate Costenbader**, high school life skills teacher. Missing: **Mrs. Amy Strayer-Gray**, elementary school nurse.

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Pride of SV
Class of 2018

**SCHUYLKILL VALLEY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport PA 19533-8631**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF****Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski**
Superintendent**Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.**
High School Principal**Mrs. Maggie E. Drake**
High School Assistant Principal**Mr. Joshua Kuehner**
Middle School Principal**Mr. Jeffrey Kerchner**
Assistant Middle School Principal**Mr. Jeremy L. Crills**
Elementary School Principal**Mrs. Melissa A. Rhoads**
Assistant Elementary School Principal**Mrs. Dawn Harris**
Director, Special Education & Pupil Services**Mrs. Melissa Kelchner**
Director of Teaching and Learning**Mr. Michael Billman**
Director, Information Technology**Mrs. Wendy Boarder**
Business Manager**Mrs. Changming Wang**
Assistant Business Manager**Mr. Craig A. Strunk**
Director, Buildings & Grounds**Miss Stephanie L. Deibler**
Athletic Director**Ms. Robin Brightbill**
Director of Human Resources**Mrs. Diane Kaag**
Food Service Director**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mr. Kevin Raudenbush, President

Mr. George H. Mertz, III, Vice President

Mrs. Linda R. Lash, Secretary

Mr. Paul L. Bendigo

Mr. Robert M. Dempsey

Mrs. Nicoleen M. Kleffel

Dr. Jay R. Melvin

Mr. G. Dane Miller

Mr. Alfonso F. Rossi

BOARD MEETINGS

Committees generally meet the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the high school's LeRoy K. Seip room.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Administration	610-916-0957
High School	610-926-1706
Middle School	610-926-7111
Elementary School	610-926-4165

**superintendent's
MESSAGE**

Holiday season is always an enjoyable time of the year, especially in school where there are celebrations, festive events and good spirits all around. It's during this time of year that many thoughts turn to the traditions of gift-giving. Whether you are buying gifts for your own children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, or contributing to families in need, the gift of a book and the additional treasure of time reading together are crucial keys to a child's success.

There are many statistics to support the academic advantages that children have when there are books in the home, at any age, and where there is parent/family involvement in reading at early ages. A study done by Evans, Kelley, Sikora and Treiman said that "children growing up in homes with at least twenty books get three years more schooling than bookless homes, independent of their parents' education, occupation and class." A report by "Reach Out and Read" found that "reading aloud is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading." For more statistics around early reading, please access ferstreaders.org/resources/fifty-top-literacy-statistics.

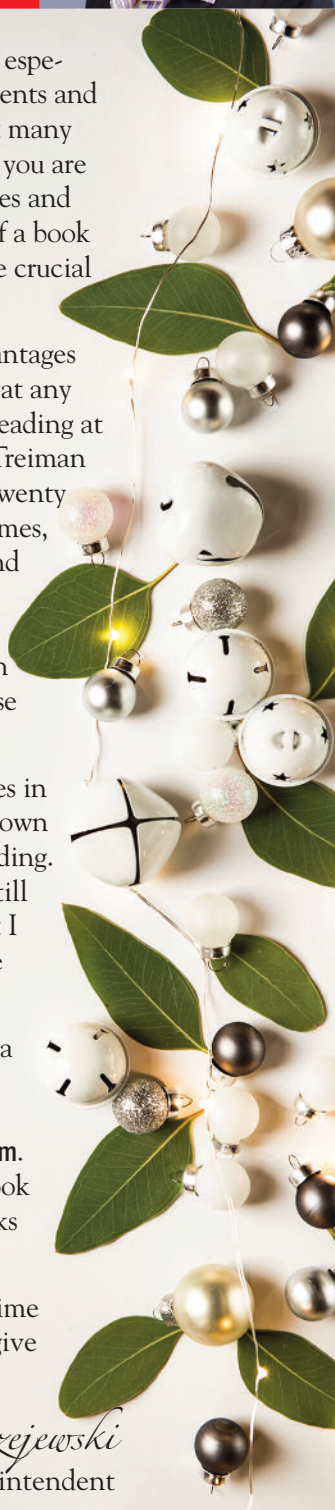
Children exposed to books will develop reading abilities in different ways and with different levels of interest. My own two grown children have very different interests in reading. My daughter's is more aligned to my interests and we still enjoy sharing books and talking about them. Now that I have grandchildren, we will be able to share some time reading together.

If you've been out of the children's literature world for a bit and are not sure what kids are reading these days, here's a page on the Scholastic website with ideas: www.scholastic.com/readingreport/favorite-childrens-books.htm.

Our school librarians, local librarians and experts at book stores are a great help in selecting age-appropriate books for children.

In closing, happy holidays and best wishes for quality time with family, friends and loved ones. 'Tis the season to give and share books!

Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski
Superintendent



2018 HOMECOMING



The 2018 SV Homecoming Court

Photo courtesy of Purdon Photography.

The district held Homecoming festivities on Friday, October 19, during halftime at the football game between Schuylkill Valley and Berks Catholic. Senior **Bridgette Bennett**, the daughter of M. Shane and Jodi Bennett, Leesport, was crowned Homecoming Queen. Senior **Andre Rivera**, son of

Michael and Zylkia Rivera, Bern Township, was named Spirit King and donated all contributions from his winning penny wars campaign to Breast Cancer Support Services of Berks County.



Spirit King Candidates, left to right: Jakob Strausser, Cort Borelli, Spirit King Andre Rivera and Matthew Maggiaro. Missing: Anakin Glassmire.

Photo courtesy of Purdon Photography.



Left to right: 2018 Homecoming Queen Bridgette Bennett, 2017 Queen Kasey Bubel, and 2018 runner-up Anna Brzostek

New Elementary School Nurse



Mrs. Amy Strayer-Gray is the elementary school's new nurse. A native of Johnstown, PA, she and her family, which includes husband, Scott, and son, Bradyn, 9, live in Ontelaunee Township. She enjoys sporting events with her

son, riding her Harley Davidson and volunteering for her church.

Mrs. Strayer-Gray obtained her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Pittsburgh and worked in medical offices, post-anesthesia care units and orthopedic trauma units prior to becoming a certified school nurse. The last eight years of her career have been spent in school nursing and she is certified in CPR/BLS and first aid instruction.

Mrs. Strayer-Gray plans to bring a caring heart to all the children at the elementary school and to brighten up their experience in the health room. "I am attempting to make it a happier place by adding appliques to the walls, smiley face rugs, brighter colors and emojis everywhere!" she said. "Knowing that children are already feeling down when they come to my room, I hope these changes will make the children smile and think happy thoughts." She credits the faculty and staff for making her transition to Schuylkill Valley a pleasant one. "My experiences have been absolutely wonderful here at SV," she said. "I've truly never worked with such gracious people."

New Middle School Assistant Principal



Mr. Jeffrey Kerchner has been hired as the middle school's new assistant principal. A resident of Hamburg, Mr. Kerchner is married to Melissa, a kindergarten teacher at Perry Elementary School in Shoemakersville. They

are the parents of William, 8, and Jack, 6. A close-knit family, they enjoy fishing, riding bikes and cooking together.

A graduate of Wilson High School in West Lawn, Mr. Kerchner earned a BS degree in marketing from Penn State University and a master's of education in both secondary mathematics and curriculum and instruction, as well as his PK-12 Principal Certification, from Kutztown University.

Before becoming a teacher, Mr. Kerchner was an outside sales representative for CarTech in southern California and a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley. He taught Algebra I at Hamburg Area Middle School for eleven years before coming to Schuylkill Valley. Mr. Kerchner is very happy that he made the change to come to Schuylkill Valley. "I am hoping to establish relationships with the staff and to get to know the kids more personally," he said. "I have some plans to improve school safety and community outreach, so I will be working with our principal, Mr. Kuehner, to enhance our already wonderful school." An exercise aficionado, Mr. Kerchner is eager to attend some of the district's after-school sports competitions. While his position as assistant principal is challenging due to the disciplinary nature of the role, Mr. Kerchner said he is feeling more welcomed every day and enjoys being a part of this organization.



Teacher Receives Award



L to R: Bringing Up A Bookworm's advisory council includes **Mrs. Eileen Coulehan**, 1st grade teacher; **Mrs. Melney Reich**, retired kindergarten teacher; **Mrs. Marsha Townsend**, 4th grade teacher; and **Mrs. Melody Shoemaker**.

Congratulations to fourth grade teacher, **Mrs. Marsha Townsend**, on winning one of this year's Freedom Through Literacy awards, presented by Judith's Reading Room, Blandon. Mrs. Townsend's non-profit organization, "Bringing Up A Bookworm," which encourages parents to read to newborn babies from day one, received the Board Option Award. A celebratory dinner was held in honor of the visionary recipients in September. Judith's Reading Room was founded in 2010 to enrich lives and societies by proactively encouraging freedom through literacy. The organization has dedicated 96 libraries in 19 countries, donated more than 127,000 books, and distributed \$29,000 to 25 individual champions of literacy.



Track & Field Coaches Named Best in State

Congratulations to Schuylkill Valley's track and field head coaches, **Mr. and Mrs. Terry and Allyson McKechnie**, who were recognized by the United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association as the Boys' High School Coaches of the Year in Pennsylvania. The McKechnies will now compete against coaches from all fifty states for recognition as the National Coaches of the Year. This honor is a testament to the dedication the McKechnies have shown toward the district, the many student-athletes they have worked with over nearly thirty years, and the assistant coaches who have worked with them to inspire and develop students.

Alumni

The middle school Panther Pride Club, a service organization, is seeking the names and addresses of any Schuylkill Valley alumni currently serving in the military. The club plans to send these alumni "appreciation surprises." Please send their contact information to **Mrs. Christine Wysocki**, cwysocki@schuylkillvalley.org

50th Class Reunion

The SV class of 1968 held its 50th reunion at Weaver's Banquet Hall on October 6. Twenty-nine members of the class attended and had a great time reconnecting with old friends.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

PYEA Goes For The Gold To Combat Childhood Cancer

Members of the SV chapter of the Pennsylvania Youth Education Association (PYEA) sponsored a Gold Out at a varsity football game in September. Led by

seniors **Allyson Rea** and **Riley Pontician**, PYEA members canned in the stands and sold a variety of gold and yellow items to raise money for the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey. Due to the generosity of the SV community, the PYEA collected and donated \$785 to families battling childhood cancer.



Young AG Leader

Senior **Mikayla Davis** was named a Berks County Young Ag Leader and was featured in the October 10 edition of the *Reading Eagle Country magazine*. Mikayla, a daughter of Mike and Angie Davis, Leesport, is the current Berks County Alternate Dairy Princess and is a member of the Northern Berks Dairy Club and Ontelaunee Grange. At school, she is president of the high school agriculture club and a greenhouse intern. She shows her dairy cows at local and state farm shows, attended the National 4-H Dairy Convention, and competed in the Pennsylvania Holstein Convention. Mikayla plans to continue her agricultural education at Penn State Berks Campus.



Ms. Lori Messner, SVES Reading Specialist, pictured with students **Sydney McNaughton** and **Ian McNaughton**.

Summer Reads

SVES students **Sydney** and **Ian McNaughton** participated in Summer Reads this year. The children recently accepted a donation of science-based books for the school from Steve Moyer Subaru through the *Subaru Loves Learning* grant.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Peace Poster Contest



Two students at the middle school participated in the Central Berks and Bern Township Lions Clubs' annual Peace Poster contest. The theme this year was "Kindness Matters." Seventh grader **Kyleana Ripple**, daughter of Melissa and Randy Ripple, Bern Township, illustrated her poster with images of Reading. Her quote about peace is "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves."

Sixth grader **Isabella Burch**, daughter of Erica Burch and stepdaughter of Kenneth Stewart, Leesport, painted a poster depicting hands surrounding the world. Her quote on peace is "If all else fails, remember one simple thing: peace, love and kindness will always win in the face of evil and hate." Both posters advanced to the Lions district level of the contest where they competed against entries from Berks and Chester counties.



Sixth Grade Outdoor Education



Students teamed up to flip a tarp while standing on it.

During Outdoor Education Days in September, SVMS sixth graders participated in cooperative learning activities that promoted skills essential for the classroom and beyond. Students learned effective teamwork in a fun and challenging environment through activities that included team t-shirt decorating, building card towers, creating journals, using map skills, escaping and following directions.



6th graders created unique hands to show that their individual characteristics make up a masterpiece.

GIRLS' SOCCER



FALL SPORTS

FOOTBALL

The team qualified for the Eastern Conference playoffs.



CROSS COUNTRY

Luke Seymour, 9th grade, son of Greg and Ronda Seymour, Centre Township, finished 19th out of 170 in the District III Boys AA meet with a time of 17:43. He qualified for the PIAA State Championship meet on November 3, where he placed 114 out of 228. His time of 18:31 earned him fifth place among all freshman in the state against AA boys.

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

The team qualified for the District III tournament and competed in the opening round.



GOLF

Jack Lynam, 12th grade, son of Don and Susan Lynam, Bern Township, tied for 10th place at the PIAA State Golf Championship. To qualify for states, Jack finished 9th at the District III golf meet and 10th at the PA Eastern Regional Championship.

National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony at SVMS



Last year's inductees join those honored this year for a group photo of the National Junior Honor Society.

On November 10, thirty-three 7th and 8th graders were inducted into the middle school's chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. Family and friends attended the ceremony and reception, held in the LGI room and cafeteria. As a service project, the eighth grade members will collect donations to supply Christmas trees to families of those serving in the military. The inductees are:

7th Grade

Jillian Boyer
Olivia Brady
Marie Engleman
Lily Freundt
Annie Gao
Jett Gyomber
Kimberly Heck
Eva Hoagland
Gabrielle Keith
Makaylah Kindoll
Emmitt Mackes
Adrianna Madden
Anna Richard
Alex Rider
Laura Schlappich
Alexis Seymour
Juliana Stichter
Amber Stoudt

Abigail Tenney
Kayley Weidner
Devin Welker
Natane White
Allison Wolf
Courtney Zimmerman

8th Grade

Elijah Houser
Peyton James
Zoe Merkel
Jordan Shekalus
Cassidy Smith
Emma Stauffer
Reese Stauffer
Gary Wenzel
Helene Yeager



Left to right:
Mike Herman and
Jake Braucher

WHITE CANE DAY



BLIND AMERICANS EQUALITY DAY

White Cane Day Fundraiser

Members of the Leo Club partnered with their sponsor, the Central Berks Lions Club, to collect monetary donations from Redner's shoppers on White Cane Day in October. White Cane Day, celebrated each year, recognizes the many achievements of blind and visually impaired individuals and the white cane as a tool promoting independent travel for those persons. All money collected on White Cane Day must be used to assist a person or organization with a sight-related need. Recently, the Lions Club used White Cane money to help a local woman receive care related to a corneal transplant. Thanks to the Leo Club for taking part in this important initiative!



Greeting customers at Redner's are from left to right: Abigail Sisco and Mike Herman.



Pride of SV Awards 2018

Left to right: Dr. Charles Frankhouser, Ms. Linda Roshong, Mrs. Crystal Cammauf-Young, Mr. Robert Dempsey, Mrs. Courtnie (Geissler) Nein, Mr. Rocco Santilli, Mr. Douglas Madenford

On October 20, Schuylkill Valley honored the achievements of seven individuals by presenting them with the Pride of SV Award. The Class of 2018 inductees are:

Mrs. Crystal Cammauf-Young

– Mrs. Cammauf-Young was one of the top ten students graduating from SV in the class of 1989. In high school, she was the marching band drum major and participated in the concert band, chorus, Panthers-On-Parade (P-O-P) pit orchestra, Pennsylvania Youth Education Association (PYEA), National Honor Society, Students Organized Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse (SODAA), basketball, volleyball and track and field. At Kutztown University, she was president of Tau Beta Sigma, the national honorary band sorority, and graduated summa cum laude in special education. In 2006, Mrs. Cammauf-Young was named Educator of the Year by the Berks

County Learning Disabilities Association. She is an SV high school special education teacher and has served as director of student activities, special education department chair, advisor for the sophomore, junior and senior classes, yearbook advisor, P-O-P business manager, color guard instructor and scorekeeper for boys' and girls' basketball. She has also coached SV's middle school basketball and high school track and field teams, and has mentored many BCIAA, District III and PIAA state qualifiers and champions in throwing events. She has been part of the coaching staff for four District III championship teams and three PIAA state championship teams.

Mr. Robert Dempsey – Mr. Dempsey served as the vice-president of the Schuylkill Valley Board of Directors during the 1992-93 session and as Board president for fourteen years from 1993-1995 and again from 1998-2009. During his tenure, the district saw numerous major improvements, including a new elementary school, new classrooms, science wing, weight room and multipurpose gym additions, and the expansion of the mid-

dle school to accommodate an additional grade level. He coached SV youth basketball for five years and served as the organization's treasurer for nineteen years. Employed by Berks Products Corporation and A.D. Moyer Lumber, Mr. Dempsey is a former associate member of the Board of Directors of the Homebuilders Association of Berks County and was named Associate Member of the Year in 2009. He rejoined the SV district Board of Directors in 2016 to fill an absence as a Board appointee and continues to serve the district in that capacity.

Dr. Charles Frankhouser – A 2002 graduate of Schuylkill Valley, Dr. Frankhouser participated in chorus, band, jazz band, marching band, National Honor Society, P-O-P, PYEA, SODAA, TV studio, cross country, and track and field. In 2006, he earned a BS in biochemistry from Albright College and was awarded the Albright College Creative & Research experience grant to monitor the aging and roost activity of three species of bats in Pennsylvania. Dr. Frankhouser is a 2010 graduate of Tufts University with an MD and MBA in healthcare administra-

PRIDE OF SV AWARDS

tion. He was fellowship trained and board-certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine, as well as Internal Medicine, at Lehigh Valley Hospital. Since 2015, he has served as the Director of Palliative Care for the Hospice and Palliative Care Center of Iredell County, NC. In 2017, he was named the Hospice Medical Director, overseeing medical care of all patients both in the facility and at home.

Mr. Douglas Madenford – A member of the class of 1988, Mr. Madenford participated in band, chorus, P-O-P and varsity baseball at Schuylkill Valley. He earned a BA in German and International Studies from Lock Haven University, an Oberstufe Zertifikat (advanced level certificate) in German linguistics from the Universitat Paderborn in Germany, and a M.Ed. in German language/literature and teacher certificate in second language learning from Susquehanna University. He is the author of several books about the Pennsylvania Dutch language and culture, co-edits an international PA Dutch publication, collaborated and starred in the documentary film Pflzisch in Amerika, and produces a YouTube channel dedicated to all things Pennsylvania Dutch. Mr. Madenford currently teaches German in the Keystone Central School District and is a guest lecturer at Penn State University.

Mrs. Courtne (Geissler) Nein – A four-year student council member at SV, serving as president during her senior year, Mrs. Nein graduated in 2004. A two-time all-state and three-time all-county field hockey player, she was selected to play on the Junior Olympic field hockey team. She earned a full athletic scholarship to play field hockey at Syracuse University, where she graduated in only three and a half years with a degree in marketing in supply chain management. She started a national wealth management firm, Good Life Companies, immediately after graduation. The company has earned numerous awards, including being named on

the list of the 5000 Fastest Growing Private Companies in America, and earning the 2016 and 2017 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For in the Nation award and the Berks County Living magazine's People's Choice for Who's Who in Business award in 2017 and 2018. Mrs. Nein received the Forbes Top Millennial Advisors award in 2018 and 2019, the Lehigh Valley Business Women of Influence award in 2018, the Forbes Top Next Generation Wealth Advisors award, Lehigh Valley Business 40 Under 40 award, and the Working Mother and SHOOK Research Top Wealth Advisor Moms award. She is a two-term president of the Spring Township Centennial Rotary Club, where she earned the Paul Harris Fellow award.

Ms. Linda Roshong – In 1967, Ms. Roshong graduated from SV and was named the Outstanding Athlete in field hockey, basketball and softball. During high school, she also participated in P-O-P and the junior/senior class play. She co-founded the Berks County Girls' Softball League in 1985, served as its president for ten years, and currently serves on the organization's board of directors. For thirty-five years, Ms. Roshong has coached softball in Berks County, including sixteen years as SV middle school's head coach and the past three years as the Fleetwood middle school head coach. From 1996-1998, she served as the coaches' instructor for the Amateur Softball Association and received the Leesport Area Athletic Association Outstanding Service award in 1996 after serving for six years as the group's secretary. Ms. Roshong is a recipient of the Ontelaunee Grange Community Citizen award and the International Lions Club Melvin Jones award, the highest honor given for volunteerism by that organization. She currently serves as secretary for the Central Berks Lions Club, membership chair for the Leesport Historical Society and a volunteer for the "Ready, Set, Read" program at SV elementary school.

Mr. Rocco (Rocky) Santilli – A 1940 graduate of the West Leesport School and later, Reading High School, Mr. Santilli enlisted and served as a 3rd Class Petty Officer, naval radio operator, during WWII. Upon returning stateside, he owned and operated the Santilli Oil Company for more than fifty years. Beyond those accomplishments, Mr. Santilli is known throughout the international softball community for his leadership and dedication to the sport. He was a highly successful softball coach with more than two thousand wins. Between 1959 and 1996, he coached the Sunners men's softball teams, which qualified for twenty American Softball Association (ASA) national tournaments, winning the championship in 1975, 1977 and 1978. In 1976, he coached the International Softball Federation world championship title team. Mr. Santilli served as head coach for the silver-medal winning USA Pan-Am games softball teams in 1983, 1987, 1989 and 1991. He coached the US Olympics Sports Festival teams, winning gold in 1978 and 1979, silver in 1982, and bronze in 1986. From 1998 to 2005 he was the head softball coach for Schuylkill Valley. Mr. Santilli has been named a Community Citizen by the Ontelaunee Grange, crowned King of Reading Baseball Towne by the Reading Phillies, and has a road, Rocky Santilli Way, named for him at the Berks County Youth Recreational Facility in Leesport. He contributed to the community by rebuilding the Leesport playground's baseball fields, supporting many area recreational activities, and donating his softball memorabilia to the Leesport Area Historical Society.



schuylkill valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Make sure to visit:



The next two issues of the Schuylkill Valley School District Newsletter (March and June) will be available online **ONLY** at

www.schuylkillvalley.org.

If you would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please call the Administration Center at 610-916-0957.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SV Elementary School PTO

JANUARY 8, 2019	ESPTO Meeting – 6:30 p.m. ES Cafeteria
FEBRUARY 8, 2019	Third Grade Event – 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. ES
FEBRUARY 8, 2019	Spring Spirit Wear Sale begins
FEBRUARY 11, 2019	No Cook Night at Leesport Diner
FEBRUARY 12, 2019	ESPTO Meeting – 6:30 p.m. ES Cafe
MARCH 15, 2019	Father/Daughter Dance
MARCH 16, 2019	Mother/Son Dance

SV Middle School PTO

Now until JANUARY 21, 2019 "What A Crock" fundraiser,
www.whatacrockschuylkillvalley.com

DECEMBER 20, 2018	Xtreme Air SV Night – 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
JANUARY 2019	Box Tops + Redner's Receipts Classroom Contests
JANUARY 15, 2019	No Cook Day/Night, Dino's Wings and Things
FEBRUARY 11, 2019	MSPTO Meeting – 6:30 p.m. MS LGI