

December 6, 2011

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>December 11</b>	<b>December 13</b>	<b>December 15</b>	<b>December 19-30</b>	<b>January 5</b>
Barnes and Noble Fundraiser	An Evening of One Act Plays 6-8 PM	Holiday Concert 6-8 PM	Winter Break	Alumni Event

## Annual Fund Donations –by Shona Mossey, *Annual Fund Chair*



The VCS Annual Fund is in full swing! I hope our entire community will consider a gift to our Annual Fund as part of their year end giving. So far, we have heard from more former parents, alumni, staff, friends and Board members than current parents! I hope that all VCS parents will remember that our Annual Fund supports school needs that are not met by tuition, such as E-Weeks, our World Languages Program, and student financial aid. Gifts to the Annual Fund are tax deductible, and greatly appreciated! Donations may be made on our website, or sent to Sarah Judd in the Development Office. Thank you!

### One Act Performance 12/13

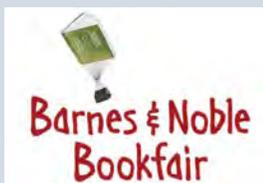
The One Act Club is performing an original interpretation of *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare. The first performance will be next Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at VCS. This version of the *Tempest* incorporates an abundance of comedic characters with a mixture of modern language and Olde English and a twist of the circus life. The play, adapted by Don Wright, will be performed by students from each grade level. This version of *The Tempest* promises to be a fantastic show! Please join us in the Commons Room at 6 PM for a delightful evening of one acts. *Submitted by Maggie Homer*

### Choral Holiday Concert 12/15

Please join us on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Vermont Commons School holiday choral concert! The concert will feature 17 students singing seven different selections of music, ranging from classic pieces like "Sweet Caroline" by Neil Diamond to contemporary music by Adele. The concert will be held at 6:00 p.m. in the Commons Room at Vermont Commons School with refreshments provided.

*Submitted by Willie Strausser*

## Barnes & Noble Fundraiser—This Sunday 12/11!



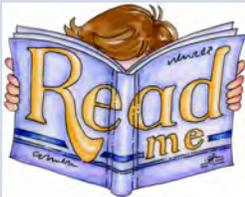
Please join us on December 11th for our very own Barnes and Noble Bookfair. Throughout the day we will have a choral concert, open mic, poetry readings and children's story telling. VCS will have a welcome table hosted by parents to talk with anyone interested in the school. If you make a purchase, in any Barnes and Noble store, on Dec. 11th and present our school code we will receive between 10-20% of the sale. If you cannot make it to a store on the 11th, you may make purchases online from Dec. 11-16th by visiting [bn.com/bookfairs](http://bn.com/bookfairs) and entering our school code. The proceeds of this event will benefit our winter Trips Program. **Our school code is 10569150.** Thank you for the support!

## Board Corner –by Rebecca Lindy Coll, *Chair of the Board of Trustees*



Community. It's the foundation of the VCS Guiding Principles, the core of our Vision, and the context of our Mission Statement. Community defines Vermont Commons School in a way that is fundamental and unique. Anyone who has had the opportunity to share an experience with VCS, whether as a student, faculty, visitor or other, walks away knowing... *feeling* that they have just been a part of something larger. Later this week I will be fortunate enough to join Peter Gilmore, Cara Simone and VCS founder Bob Skiff in attending the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) ceremony in Boston where Vermont Commons School will be recognized as a newly accredited member. Our young school that began with the Skiff family setting community context at the core of education will be recognized not only for the superior education we provide, but for the example we set engaging our students outside of the classroom and in the world. Congratulations to faculty, staff, administrators, students, and families who have all been a part of this remarkable achievement.

## VCS Literary and Art Magazine –by Jennifer Cohen



VCS is launching a literary/art magazine this year! We need submissions of poetry, short literary work, and art. Please give submissions to Jordanna Dulaney, Ellis Govoni, or Jennifer Cohen, either in person, or by e-mail. We also need a title for our magazine - if you have suggestions for the title, send them to one of these editors and we will vote on our favorite. The author of the favorite title will win a large pizza for lunch. The deadline for title suggestions is Dec 9th, and the deadline for writing and art is Dec 16th.

## Sibling Shadow Day Recap –by Sarah Soule

Two years ago, at the annual fall bonfire, Anna Leffler and Nick Sears, who now are members of our eighth grade class, approached me about having a "sibling shadow day" where brothers and sisters of current students could visit VCS and learn more about the school. Thanks to Anna and Nick, a special program was created and it is now a yearly event! On Thursday, December 1st, we welcomed nine younger brothers and sisters to VCS and they each spent the day attending classes. Peter Goff organized a special Green Gray competition for participating siblings and Natalie and Henry Harder and Sophia and Preston Webb entertained us at morning meeting. Currently VCS has nine sets of siblings attending the school and there are multiple younger brothers and sisters of graduates who are enrolled. We value the family legacy at Vermont Commons!



## The Wealth of Communities –by Mark Cline Lucey



**The Senior Social Studies class, Ecological Economics, takes a close look at what local folks are doing to increase community vitality, raise levels of health and happiness, and decrease our carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.**

This has been an inspiring and eye-opening semester in Social Studies 12: Ecological Economics. Using *Deep Economy* by Middlebury College Professor Bill McKibben as our main text and the basis of our curriculum, we have explored McKibben's central thesis that a reorientation toward local economies, community mindedness, and neighborliness, is necessary for addressing climate change and peak oil, as well as human wellbeing and connectedness. We've had impassioned classroom discussions and the students have written reflections on their idea of a "well-lived life", their thoughts on personal responsibility to ones community, and to their own personal path to happiness or their role within a consumer society.



Most recently, we have shifted from analyzing the problems to taking a look at what Vermonters are doing to address them. This orientation "out of the classroom and into the world" has brought practical reality, with all its joys and challenges, into clearer focus for the students.



Mitch Wertlieb at Vermont Public Radio gave us a tour of the station and talked with us about the technical and practical aspects of radio, as well as the role that listener-supported radio plays in keeping a community strong and connected. Brian Waxler of Pomerleau Real Estate gave us an exclusive tour of their Ferrisburgh Solar Farm and told us all about the challenges and rewards of solar energy in Vermont.



We met with Chapin Spencer at the offices of Local Motion and heard about their efforts to "increase the incentives for human-powered transportation and the disincentives for fossil fuel-powered movement." We visited the Burlington Cohousing development and spoke with Don Schramm about the cohousing movement and why he has worked for years to build a place where residents can intentionally increase their interaction and cooperation with neighbors while decreasing their impact on the environment and their bills. And most recently, a representative of Front Porch Forum met with us to talk about the role that the internet can play in connecting neighbors and communities.

In the coming weeks, the Seniors will visit a local farm, hear some music, meet with professors from the Gund Institute at UVM, and meet with representatives from the Community and Economic Development Office in the Burlington city government.

Vermont is truly an inspiring place to live! Bill McKibben is correct that there is a great deal of wealth (of the social capital variety) in our community, and it is an honor to make that community part of our classroom.

# The Unconscious Landscape, New Works by Ben Patrick



An exhibit of oil paintings by Ben Patrick, artist in residence, is currently showcased at Stephen and Burns, 116 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont.

The unconscious, restless landscapes of our surroundings become the occasion for this new series of compositions: purely pigmented, lucid, and questioning. There is an exploration of what is underneath here, a gaze into the reflections that we too often forget to look at.

Please visit Stephen and Burns Salon located on Church Street for these new selections of paintings. All works are currently installed, and there will be a reception on Tuesday, December 20th from 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## This Week in Photos



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