

NOVEMBER 15TH, 2013

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## Upcoming Events

<b>November 19th</b> Community Film Series <i>Girl Rising</i>	<b>Nov 23rd-Dec 1st</b> Thanksgiving Break VCS Closed	<b>December 2nd</b> VCS Film Screening <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<b>December 4th</b> Special Schedule Early Dismissal
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## VCS Volleyball '13 Finishes Another Strong Season *by Peter Goff*

The 2013 Volleyball season is officially over with the final whistle of the State Championship at Johnson State College this weekend. There were many highlights to the season, and each of the more than 30 student-athletes on the team have success stories.

Our team's goals do not include individual awards and recognitions; but it is great to be acknowledged by our opponents and peers. The 2013 All-League team below represents the best of Vermont HS Volleyball, as voted by opposing coaches (we don't vote for our own players):

- Boys (8 total):**
- Setters (2 on All-League Team):**  
Nick Carpenter 00 EFHS
- Back-court (3 on All-League Team):**  
Eli Hulse 9 VCS  
Cole Blondin 9 Essex
- Front-court: (4 on All-League Team):**  
Jay Cobb 66 LI  
Marsh Palin 7 Essex  
Blaz Mihaljevicz 21 BHS  
Mason Hill 15 VCS  
Brenden Gannon 77 CVU

- Girls (11 total):**
- Setters (2 on All-League Team):**  
Josie Curtis 22 EFHS  
Mila Cvetkovic 47 LI
- Back-court: (3 on All-League Team):**  
Amira Silverman 5 VCS  
Lisa Shold 11 CVU  
Lauren Johnson 7 CVU
- Front-court (4\* on All-League Team):**  
Mikhal Yudien 22 VCS  
Nora Hill 19 VCS  
Phoebe Seale 5 MVCS  
Hannah Dinklage 11 BHS  
Cailie Moehn 15 Essex
- At-Large (1 on All-League Team):**  
Maggie Homer 3 VCS

While we can't match the sheer numbers and depth of the larger schools, VCS has more All-Leaguers (6) than the two schools in the Championships finals (Essex & CVU) combined! Congratulations to Senior co-captain Maggie Homer, Junior co-captains Nora Hill and Mikhal Yudien, Junior Eli Hulse, and Frosh Mason Hill and Amira Silverman!

In addition to the regular-season awards, our girls' team earned the Spirit Award for their all-around-

camaraderie during a very stressful Championship Tournament. Again, coaches were not allowed to vote for their own players for these awards, so the obvious respect our opponents have for the Flying Turtles speaks very highly of the VCS community.

I'll be working with our amazing new manager (Emma Bell) to calculate and compile all of the new team records that have been set this season, we hope to have those published by the end of Thanksgiving Break.

Ed Wolfstein (Sports Illustrated-cover photographer) was at the championship yesterday and will be posting a gallery of photos...with shots from all of the teams. He's one of our parents, so it's VCS-heavy...but there are multiple galleries. A framed photo might make a great holiday gift!! (he hasn't uploaded the photos yet, but they will be there soon: <http://ed.photoshelter.com/gallery-list>)

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Special thanks to the VCS administration (especially our AD Chance) and faculty for their support of our coaching staff and players, as we missed meetings and classes throughout the season. We also really appreciate Peter Gilmore's trek up North to see us play!

Once again, our parents provided the foundation of all of our success, from scoring/line volunteers at home matches, to the amazing team dinner at the Senior's home, to the work put in by Tammy Francis, Dinah Larsen, Rayona Silverman (OK, not a parent...but a committed sibling!), and Colleen Leffler at the T-shirt/program table at States, to our multiple photographers (Lee K., Nina M., Ed W., etc...), to our volunteer trainer (Carol Blattspieler), to everyone else who helped transport kids and feed coaches/officials, etc...etc...etc... I'm sure I'm forgetting a cast of thousands, thank you all!

And yes, we will be planning a parent/teacher vs. kids volleyball match soon (maybe prior to or after our first basketball match???) ... stay tuned.

We are going to move to a buy-your-own jersey program next season, my fashion-design team is hard at work coming up with an amazing new look for VCS volleyball. The nice thing is that you will be able to put your name on the jersey!

...play basketball!



## News from PACS *by LaTrisha Gibbs & Steph Muzzy*

### **PACS Coffee**

Our 11/6 morning coffee was well attended by parents and faculty. Our next coffee date is Tuesday, 12/12 from 7:45 – 8:45 a.m. Come socialize with other parents in the VCS community and take advantage of this time to chat with your child's teachers. Grab a doughnut or two while you're there!

### **Teacher Appreciation Luncheon**

It's that time of year again! We will show our appreciation to our fabulous faculty and staff on Friday, December 13th. Please save the date! Parents supply the food and treats and serve the meal, so please be on the lookout for a SignUp Genius right after Thanksgiving.

### **Class Dinners**

This week wrapped up another successful session of our parent dinners. Thank you to all of the families who opened their homes and to all of the parents who participated in the potlucks. The conversations were stimulating and heartfelt.

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### **A Big THANK YOU!**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dinah Larsen and Lisa Lillibridge for their help in our transition into our new roles as PACS representatives. We know you are busy preparing your seniors for the next phase in their lives after VCS, so we appreciate you giving us your time and invaluable input!

## Coffee House Tonight, 11/15!

A reminder that the VCS Coffee House, hosted by our seniors, is *tonight* from **6pm-9pm** at the school. We invite all community members to come mingle and be entertained by our talented students! The Coffee House helps to fund our upcoming Belize and Sundance Encounter Weeks. View the teaser for the event by [clicking here](#).

# The Pilot's Tale *by Ben Maksym*

*The Language Arts Department is happy to begin publishing creative student work in Turtle Tracks. This week's selection is from Ben Maksym. It is a look at part of the story of Jane Eyre, through the eyes of Mr. Rochester's dog, Pilot.*

The hound bounded up the hill, followed slowly by his master and the horse. Upon cresting the hill, the dog saw a woman, staring anxiously toward the horse and rider who were following. The dog passed, and then, upon hearing a cry of distress, rushed back, frantically sniffing and inspecting his master, as well as barking until the skies themselves could hear the cries. The man, who had, upon becoming disentangled from the horse, fallen on the ground, rose now, and said in a commanding tone, "Down, Pilot!"

The dog had once belonged to a Jamaican man, who had raised him from a pup. The dog had been christened Pilot for his tendency to rush ahead, as if directing those who followed him. This trait, unfortunately, hadn't worked in poor Pilot's favor. The owner had leashed the dog, trying to teach it discipline, trying to hold it back. When these attempts failed, the dog was beaten and starved into submission, until it was naught but skin, bone, and fear. The dog fled from all humans, who he saw as threats, and was often seen scavenging in the villages like a common pest. Then, a woman, thought by many to be mad, found the poor wretched beast. At first, the dog cowered, but she showed him love and companionship. When she married, the dog was strong and vibrant once again, full of power and life. The husband took the dog, never learning of its past or hardships, only knowing the name: Pilot. The dog missed his mistress, as she was soon locked away, and he, in hopes that he might see her again, remained at her husband's side, no longer the pilot, but the passenger, the apostle, the follower.

# The VCS Sustainability Survey *by Bradley Materick*

## Please Complete by November 22nd!

You may not have known this, but VCS now has a Sustainability Committee! We revealed ourselves earlier this week at a Morning Meeting and gave a presentation on some of the work we have been doing this year so far. The Sustainability Committee—disguised as Bradley’s Research & Service class, called “Launching the VCS Sustainability Initiative”—has been contemplating the meaning of “environmental sustainability” and what this might look like here at VCS. We have also identified a range of areas here at our school in which we could work towards greater sustainability over time, including Transportation, Energy Use, Water Use, Campus Design & Materials, Solid Waste Disposal and Products We Use.

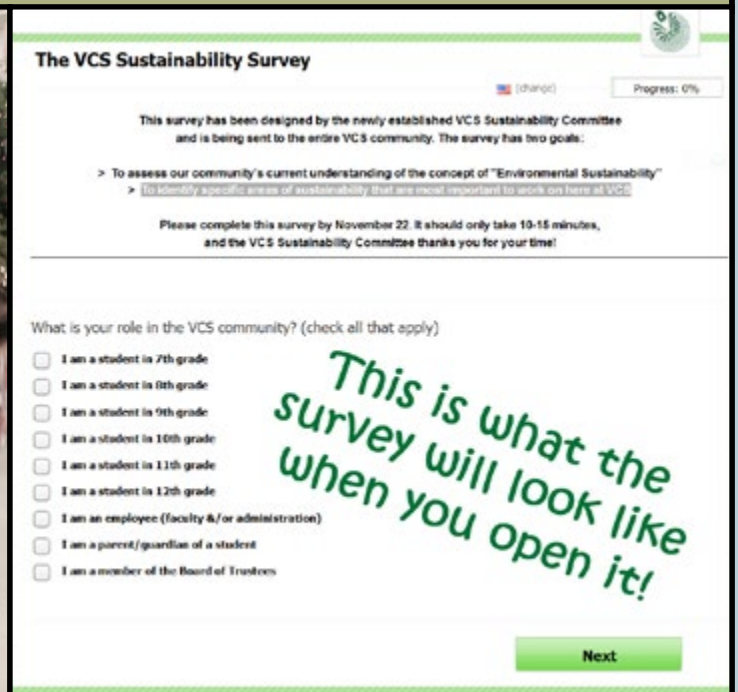
This week, the Sustainability Committee sent out an email to all the members of our VCS community containing a link to a Sustainability Survey. The purpose of this survey is twofold:

- To assess our community’s current understanding of “Environmental Sustainability”
- To identify specific areas of sustainability that are most important to work on here at VCS

We would be grateful if you could complete this survey by November 22nd. It should only take 10-15 minutes of your time, and the feedback will be very helpful as the Sustainability Committee moves forward.

You will see in the survey that the Sustainability Committee has brainstormed a number of possible sustainability projects that VCS could pursue. Our thought is that, to the maximum extent possible, the projects would be planned and implemented by students themselves, within the context of their academic curriculum. For example, we feel that many of these projects would make excellent Research & Service classes. Such projects represent years worth of opportunities for students to actively engage in the enhancement of our school’s sustainability! If you have any additional ideas for possible projects, there is space in the survey for you to share your thoughts!

The survey can be found online by [clicking here](#).



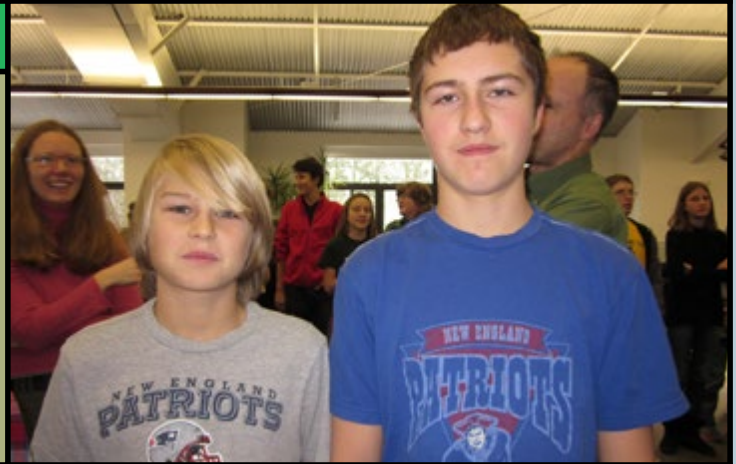
## VCS Team Attends Rowland Foundation Conference at UVM *by Mark Cline-Lucey*

On Wednesday, November 6th, UVM hosted The Rowland Foundation Conference at the Davis Center. High schools from all over Vermont were invited to participate. VCS sent a group of nine people to the conference, consisting of two board members, four teachers, one parent and two students. The key note speaker was Dennis Littky, who is well known in New England for his work developing over 100 Big Picture schools across the country. A major point of his keynote talk, and of the day in general, was that a lot of our current educational system is boring and not relevant to the average teenager. One way to make the students more engaged in their learning is to let them have more voice and choice in what they study; to give them more opportunities to follow their intellectual passions. This is the foundation of the Big Picture school curriculum. The VCS team agreed that we already do an exceptional job of feeding student passion for learning, but that there are steps we could take to give students even more opportunity to choose and to dig in to what deeply interests them. The team also plans to follow up with a Summary of Learning to the faculty and board, and to propose action steps for the school. A special thanks to Derrick Senior and Mark Cline Lucey for organizing the event, and to Nina Mantegna and Mason Hill for attending as our student representatives.

## From the Admissions Office

Thursday, December 5th, is Sibling Shadow Day whereby brothers and sisters of Vermont Commons students, graduates and former students can spend the day attending classes and learning more about life as Flying Turtle! Please contact Sarah Soule, Director of Admissions, [ssoule@vermontcommons.org](mailto:ssoule@vermontcommons.org), if you wish to attend.

We only ask that attendees be in fifth grade or older to join us for the day.



## Robert Lair Visits 9th Grade Social Studies

A huge thank you to Robert Lair, father of 8th grader Ana Kusserow-Lair and professor of religion and philosophy at St. Michael's College, for sharing his knowledge and BIG questions with the 9th grade Social Studies class this week. Robert talked about the origins of religions as the students begin their unit on the rise of early religions. This visit was the result of the Community Resources Inventory, where Robert shared his information, and teacher Mark Cline Lucey saw an opportunity to supplement the class curriculum.



## VCS Students Attend Brown University Model U.N.

This past weekend, students travelled to Brown University in Rhode Island to take part in the annual Model U.N. The last page of this week's Turtle Tracks is devoted to photos from the event. Also, on our website you can view a video from the event prepared by Mark Cline-Lucey and the students profiling the weekend. The video can be found on the [Social Studies department page](#) of the VCS website.

Scroll to the next page to view photos from Brown U!



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