



NOVEMBER 21, 2014

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Upcoming Events

November 24th-28th
Thanksgiving Vacation

December 3rd
Full Day of School

December 4th
Sibling Shadow Day

December 6th
SATs

Vermont Commons Hosts Model UN Conference

by Camille Bartsch

VCS hosted the second annual Model United Nations Conference, “The Napoleonic Wars,” on November 14 –November 15. More than 90 delegates, committee chairs, and crisis staff attended, representing the following schools: Burlington High School, Champlain Valley Union High School, Middlebury Union High School, Mount Mansfield Union High School,

Rice Memorial, and Vermont Commons. This year’s conference included a lollipop fundraiser which raised \$163 for the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf. Juniors Camille Bartsch and Galen Fastie served as secretary general and crisis director, respectively. Senior Adrian Kelly served as vice-crisis director. Many thanks to the incredible Vermont Commons Model UN team and Mark Cline Lucey, who made this event possible.



REMINDERS

- Wednesday, December 3rd (originally a half day) will be a full day.
- Sibling Shadow Day is December 4th! Siblings of current students at grades 4 and above are welcome to shadow for a day! Contact Sarah Soule to sign up!

Middle School Scientists Work with UVM Scholars

Seventh Grade Heads to UVM

by Seth Fisher-Olvera

Editor's Note: On Monday, Vermont Commons' seventh graders were invited to be the test-subjects of a Systems Thinking class project for UVM undergraduates in the School of Natural Resources.

At 8:40 exactly, our class headed to the bus, and, with Peter at the wheel, we departed to UVM to be taught a class by a group of four college students. The bus ride was filled with the chatter of 12-13 year olds as we arrived at the Aiken Building. We went inside and waited for the students to appear. When they did, two of them took us on a tour of the campus while the other two got the lesson plan ready.

During the second part of our day, we learned

about system sciences. We learned how the pine beetle is eating all the pine trees in Colorado and made a wheel to solve the problem.

We then broke up into groups and did the same thing with a system assigned to us. There was rain forest, ocean and desert. My group was desert. Our problem was desertification; our Cause was warming temperatures and our Symptom was surrounding habitats of dying deserts. Our solution was to introduce policies with standards for irrigation, and also to build a wall of forest around the desert to stop it from advancing. This last technique is being used to contain the deserts in northern China as they slowly inch toward the mainly populated areas.

All in all, it was a fun day. Even though we could not go outside, we learned a lot about UVM's campus and college in general.



Noyce Scholars Visit Vermont Commons

by Peter Goff

On Tuesday, Vermont Commons hosted the UVM Noyce Scholars for a Living Vermont (8th

grade) lab and pizza lunch. For the past six years, Vermont Commons has been the "field site" for an annual visit by the [Noyce Scholars](#) from UVM. This program is for top-notch future science teachers. I have worked with them to provide them with class/lab/field experiences every year.



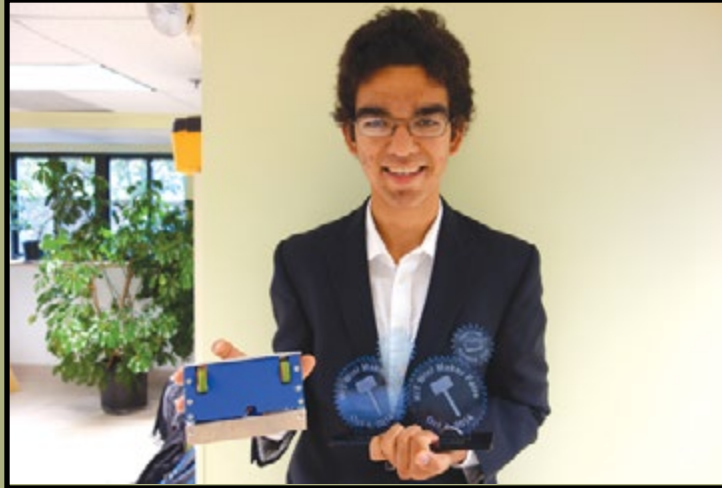
Photos by Henry Harder

Adrian Kelly Wins MIT Maker Faire Rookie of the Year

Senior Adrian Kelly won the Robotics competition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Mini Maker Faire on October 4. He was also awarded MIT's "Rookie of the Year."

Adrian competed primarily against current MIT students and graduates.

"The Mini Maker Faire was hectic and tons of fun," Adrian wrote on his blog. "I met some awesome people and didn't have time for any pictures, but somehow won the Antiweight Rumble and came home with the Best Rookie."



At Vermont Commons, Adrian has displayed a passion for chemistry, engineering, and other technical skills. He is active in the Math Club, and in 2013 he designed and built a remote controlled vehicle as part of the University of Vermont's TASC competition. The vehicle moved foam blocks through a maze and then converted into an autonomous object avoidance robot.

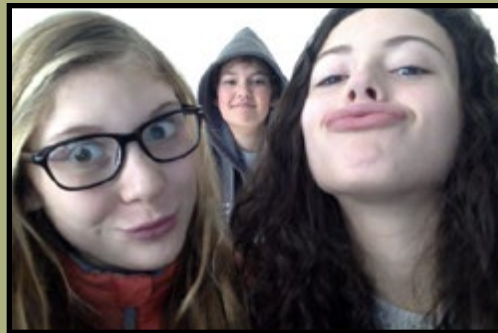
Adrian is looking into engineering internships for his Senior Project in the spring, and hopes to enroll in engineering school in the fall of 2015.

Seventh Grade Introduction to World Languages Class Cooks a Chinese Feast

by Kent Vaccaro

To enrich the cultural experience of the Introduction to World Languages class, we cooked Chinese food. To start, we watched a good video of a group of kids cooking a Chinese meal. They clearly showed the ingredients, cooking, and fun of preparing a Chinese dish. Next, we assembled into groups and decided what to cook. The groups were the Chow Mein (Seth, Isa, Milo), Wok this Way (Owen, Ethan), the Flaming Tents (Kent, Sabi, Tess), and Jephena (Jess, Phoebe, Lena).

After lots of preparation, we all met at one group member's house and cooked



our delicious meals. The Chow Mein prepared a chicken chow mein; Wok This Way made deep-fried beef wontons; the Flaming Tents made beef and vegetable stir-fry with sticky rice and New Year Cake (nian gao); and finally Jephena made almond cookies and candied apples.

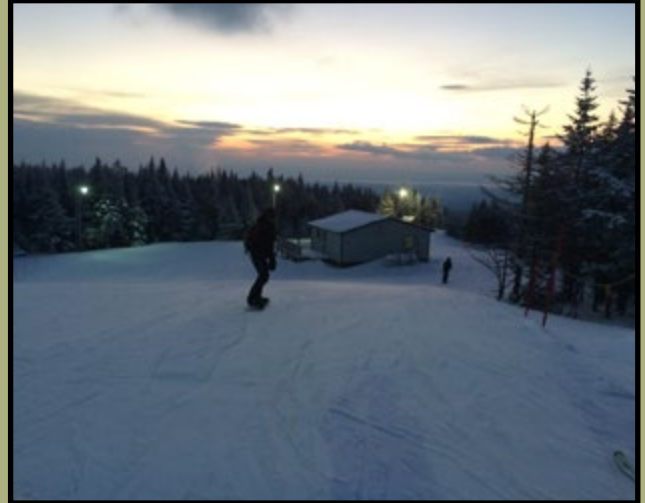
On Monday, we all shared our food in a huge feast. To wrap up this project, each group made a clear step-by-step movie that showed our dishes, just like the one we saw at the beginning of this project. All in all, this was a great experience, and it sure was delicious!

Call for Skiing Turtles!

January 2015 will mark the first month of Vermont Commons School's ski program!. All students, regardless of age or experience, are welcome to join us at Bolton Valley. The cost for transportation will be \$100 and it will pay for five trips in a bus to the mountain. This is a package deal, and we will not be able to reimburse families if dates are missed.

Independent to this will be ticket sales. We are still working on pricing, but the approximate cost of the tickets will be \$20.00 - \$25.00 per an evening of skiing or boarding. Participants in the program will pay on the evening they are joining us if they do not already have a season pass. The dates for the program are as follows: January 9th, 16th, February 6th, 13th, and March 6th.

There will be make up days in March if the weather does not permit us to drive to the mountain. Students will not ski or ride without a helmet. Students also always ski/ride in a group, never alone, as this is a community, all inclusive Vermont Commons style activity.



If interested, please bring a check to the front desk for \$100.00 by December 12th to secure your spot on the bus. Thank you, and let it snow!

Common Hour

Erick Tichonuck



Happy Thanksgiving!

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