

APRIL 16, 2015

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 17-26
April Break

April 18
ACTs

May 2
SATs

May 9
Spring Gala

Flying Turtle Delegates Visit the Dartmouth Model U.N.

Mark Cline Lucey

Seven years ago, Vermont Commons attended its first Model United Nations conference. Since then, the program has developed into a major institution at the school, and a significant vehicle in our mission of developing global citizens. Last weekend a record twenty-five of our high school students (over 40% of eligible students) attended DartMUN, the annual conference hosted by Dartmouth College.

Some of our veterans have attended thirteen different conferences during their years at VCS. For others, this was their first or second conference. Novices served primarily on General Assembly committees, representing countries that they had been assigned and researched to prepare for. Along with delegates from other schools, they wrestled with real global issues related to human rights, economic needs, health, and the environment. Our veterans served on specialized and crisis committees, some of which took place in the past (the Trojan War) and some in the future (a mid-century effort to deal with rising oceans and disappearing nations). They all debated, collaborated, wrote resolutions, found allies, and gave speeches.

Watch the video here! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZfsmG2ya3E>

More conferences are already planned for next year. We are registered for Brown University in November, and plans are underway for the 3rd annual VCS MUN - 100% organized by our amazing students. We'll definitely attend Dartmouth again (we are one of their longest-term, most committed schools), and possibly Yale in January.



Justine Magowan '12 Accepted to the Stella Adler Studio of Acting

Sarah Soule

Congratulations to VCS alumna Justine Magowan '12, Tulane University '16. Justine has been accepted to study at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting!

She was chosen as one of 32 students from a pool of 800 applicants. We are incredibly proud of Justine!

Her other acting credits include: "Woyzeck," "Mauritius," and "Eurydice" at Tulane University, where she is a member of the Class of 2016. Last summer she appeared in Stowe Theatre Guild's "On the Town."



Chagas Research Team Selected

Peter Goff

The UVM component of the National Science Foundation research team has selected three VCS students to join the Chagas project. Junior Lincoln Pierce's first introduction to VCS was when he took a UVM Systems Modeling course in the summer prior to his first (freshman) year at VCS. Dr. Rizzo and Dr. Stevens last saw Lincoln when he was presenting his class project...a model of Chagas disease!

Lincoln is joined by sophomores Anna Hulse and Henry Harder. Anna and Henry have a strong background in system dynamics modeling, and were both active participants in VCS' Chagas modeling club.

Drs. Rizzo and Stevens were very impressed with all twelve applications; they specifically mentioned that these were as strong (or stronger) than the majority of undergraduate writing they grade on a regular basis. Kudos to our LA department!



There's Still Time!

Yearbook

There's still time to order a yearbook! It's out to be printed but you can still buy a copy by clicking [here](#) or by giving a check for \$55 to Adriana.



There's Still Time!

Maple Syrup

The England trip is selling 500ml bottles of maple syrup for \$20 apiece, courtesy of James Jennings! Order with Christie, or with James Jennings at james@javahill.com!

Bird Up!

Rainer Kannenstine & Owen Williams

During this semester, a group of students have united together under Bradley's leadership to help improve the Vermont Commons campus in the "Landscaping with Native Plants for Wildlife" Research & Service class. While you are aware of the renovations being made to the school this summer, these students decided to approach the betterment of our campus from a different angle...nature! The first step? Using nest boxes and feeders to attract flying animals, specifically birds and bats.

These students researched cavity nesting bird and bat species that are native to Vermont and are likely to frequent our campus, and then worked tirelessly to design and build feeders and nest boxes by hand. Last week, we were able to finish installing all of our creations around the school. There is a nest box for the Eastern Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*) and one for the Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*), several nesting baskets for the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*), and one daytime roosting home for the Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifuga*). If you are observant, you will now be able to find these around campus, and hopefully they will soon attract the species they were built for. We have also created several bird feeders that will serve a variety of species, and this week installed a post outside the student entrance where our feeders will hang.

Our class will continue to improve the school with our next effort which has already begun: introducing native plants to replace the non-native invasive species that were removed last semester by Bradley's previous R&S class. We have researched and sourced seven different species of native plants—including elderberry, blueberry and cardinal flower—that we will plant outside the student entrance of the school during the final weeks of the semester. These plants are not only beautiful, but they will also produce flowers and berries that will attract even more wildlife to our campus!

These animal homes and native plants will beautify our school in a way that complements the summer renovations, bringing Vermont Commons closer to nature and helping our community to make the world just a little bit more sustainable.



A Note from Bradley

In addition to building nest boxes, we also installed a live webcam in the box designed for the Great Crested Flycatcher. We hope to have a link to streaming video from the webcam on the Vermont Commons website soon, but in the meantime anyone in our community can access the live video (and audio!) feed by going to the website <https://user.meshare.com/user/login> and logging in with "VCSBirdCams" (case sensitive) for both the username and password. We just finished installing the webcam this week, so there are no birds in the box yet, but we hope that a pair of flycatchers will move in soon!

Aztecs vs. Tlaxcalans

Adriana Comtois

Once again, two neighboring tribes, the Aztecs and Tlaxcalans have found themselves in a Flower War. Don't be fooled by the name, because this war is far from pretty or nice. Both groups prepared for a whole week, making their weapons, creating their shields and working on their strategies. They helped each of their team members to have the proper weaponry and to be ready and fit for battle. As they were drawing the sun god on their shields, they would be talking about strategies to capture more prisoners. There was great excitement in the air. After all, you are considered a great warrior in Aztec society if you can take a prisoner on your own.

And finally the day arrived; the warriors were eager; the frenzy was palpable. They took their places outside, they were reminded of the rules and they started showing their Macuahuitls and obsidian knives. Soon these cardboard weapons would be swung at each other and the warriors started moving fast, avoiding the enemy weapons, protecting themselves with their shields. In one corner a jaguar warrior would be given instructions to their group about avoiding capture; on the other side they were discussing who would be the easiest person to grab.

After 15 minutes of intense battle, a warrior was taken and we had a winner. Like in real history, the Aztecs defeated their rivals, the Tlaxcalans. Then, they celebrated with chocolate. It was truly epic.



7th Grade Social Studies Tours Shelburne Farms

Ben Wang

The 7th-grade Social Studies class visited Shelburne Farms on March 23. We met with their Curator of Collections, Julie Eldridge, who gave us a tour of the Inn before it opened for the season. She also told us stories about the Gilded Age in Vermont and shared artifacts from their archives.

Thank you for the tour, Julie!



Bring a Friend Day!

Jill Strawbridge

We are happy to announce Bring a Friend Day, Tuesday, May 5th! Similar to Sibling Shadow Day, students are invited to bring a friend from outside the Vermont Commons community to experience a day as a Flying Turtle! If you have a friend in mind who is able to attend, please contact Jill (jstrawbridge@vermontcommons.org) or stop by her office to RSVP.

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