



MAY 19TH, 2014

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Upcoming  
Events

May 26th  
Memorial Day  
VCS Closed

May 27th-29th  
Exam Review  
3:30 Early Dismissal

May 30th  
Noon Dismissal  
& Prom

May 30th-June 4th  
Final Exams

## A Discussion with Gen. Keith Alexander

by Camille Bartsch

“You are the next generation of leaders in the military, politics, and captains of industry,” General Keith Alexander opened his remarks to the Vermont Commons School student body, faculty, and parents on Friday, May 9th.

Sarah Soule was able to invite the recently retired Director of the National Security Agency (NSA) to take questions from students for more than an hour. Many students asked about ethical, historical, and current debates about the conflict between the NSA’s role in national security and civil liberties. General Alexander was consistent in his responses that our nation’s interest and civil liberties are not in conflict. He explained how the NSA has court approval to make our nation safer in monitoring foreign activity that could harm our country.

Some top questions included what languages will best prepare us leaders for tomorrow. General Alexander responded that studying Chinese is important for conflicts around Asia, Arabic is necessary for hot spots including Syria, and Russian is important with current issues in the Ukraine and the European Union.

When asked who inspires General Alexander, he shared a story about a double leg amputee soldier who was welcomed to the NSA family after his rehabilitation from war. He explained that we fight for our country on the field or with NSA responsibilities. He personalized his duties explaining, “We become family.”

*continued on page 2*



## Gen. Keith Alexander (cont.)

Another question was about collecting metadata from phone calls and emails. One question brought up was about tapping into German Chancellor, Angela Merkle's personal cell phone; he responded that it is the NSA's job to put all the pieces together so that America will not be taken by surprise. General Alexander explained that the New York subway bombing was averted by connecting the dots with phone numbers to and from suspected individuals. A potential bombing would have caused New York to collapse into the river, which would have been a violent act of terrorism creating mass chaos.

It was a great privilege to have a decorated West Point General and US government official visit Vermont Commons. Overall, General Alexander was respectful to us students and encouraged us to make a difference in our nation and world.

*Photos courtesy of Lee Krohn & Amira Silverman*



## Math 7: Geometry and Edible Cars

*by Jessica Redmond*

Prior to Spring Break, Math 7 students designed and built cars made of food as part of their Geometry unit. Students could choose to design for performance or yumminess. If a team designed their car for performance they tested their cars on an inclined plane and the distance the car traveled was measured. If they designed their car for yumminess, they used food items that appealed the most to the judges senses. As expected, all the cars created were extremely creative and incorporated many of the concepts the students were learning in Math 7 about space shapes and symmetry. Matt and Liam's car traveled a distance of 8 feet, Natalie and Emma's car used ice cream as part of the body, and Aiden and Jasper made home-made hard-tack for their wheels. Congratulations to all!



## Congrats, Auburn!

by Sarah Soule

Congratulations to sophomore Auburn Sandra who has been chosen by the Shelburne Charlotte Rotary Club to participate in their summer leadership program. She will attend a weekend retreat on the campus of Lyndon State College in mid-June. She was chosen from a competitive applicant pool of candidates from across Chittenden County!



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