

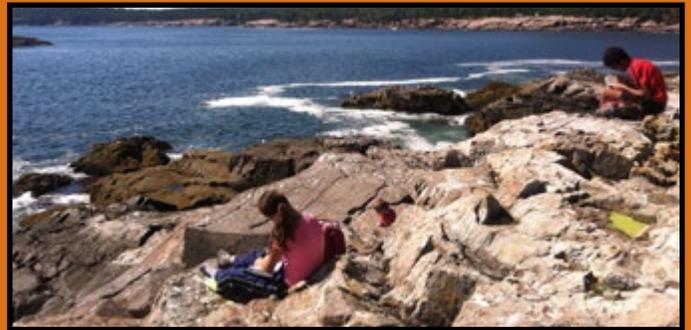
SPECIAL  
EDITION!

OCTOBER 1ST, 2014

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## FALL ENCOUNTER WEEK



## 7th Grade Core Encounter Week

# Vermont 101

by Kent Vaccaro '20

On Monday we went to the Fairbanks Museum in Saint Johnsbury. We had a great tour guide named Bobby. He told us all about the night sky when we visited the planetarium, talked about faraway galaxies, and about Greek and Roman myths. On Tuesday we headed to Montpelier for a day at the capitol. During a walk downtown, we met Peter Shumlin, the governor, outside a coffee shop. We went to the State House and got a tour all around the building. All the girls sat in Sarah's mom's seats in the Senate and House of Representatives. On Wednesday we first went to GMC (Green Mountain Club), went on a short hike and helped with fixing a sign. Then we went to Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Rock of Ages, and Hope Cemetery. Finally we headed to the yurt where we were to spend the next two nights.

On Thursday we went on a seven mile hike at Little River in Waterbury. We passed old farms, stone walls, rundown houses, and graveyards from the eighteen hundreds. The hike was great; the historic sites were very neat. Some were still intact. On Friday we woke up had hot chocolate and burnt oatmeal. We all packed our bags and headed out to Huntington and saw the Birds of Vermont Museum, where Bradley gave us a tour. There were many different carved birds there, including one from South America, with a 31 inch long tail! We all greatly enjoyed our trip!



### Who is Ethan Allen?

The following quotes are from Ethan Allen or were written about him by his friends, his friends, and his enemies. These firsthand accounts known in the history world as "primary sources," are the pieces of evidence that historians use to write history.

Ethan Allen has been called many names over the years. Why do you think people had so many different opinions about Ethan Allen during his time?

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the quotes and decide how you would describe Ethan Allen based on that evidence. Place the label you choose under that quote.

"I shall make no apologies... Many times I die for you, as well as if occasions shall so be do it again."  
—Ethan Allen in the journal address to the militia

"Ever since I attained... I have felt... that I..."

"Mr. Allen, fickle and enterprising, had changed his Sentiments...He was joined by...Men of rash and violent tempers...and they vainly conceived that they were become invincible."  
—James Duane, a lawyer representing New York in the Crown litigation

Greedy   Patriotic   Tall   Traitor

Loud

"Allen's fortitude and firmness seem to have placed him out of the reach of misfortune."  
—The real for...

A young boy with brown hair is looking towards the camera. He is positioned in the bottom right corner of the activity sheet, partially overlapping the text.

9th Grade Core Encounter Week

# Champlain Bike Odyssey

by Eli Hinds '16

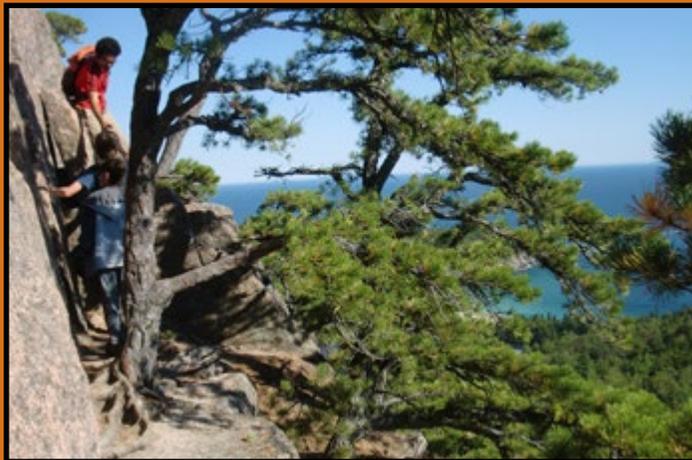
The 9th Grade Bike trip pedaled around Lake Champlain on the Lake Champlain Bikeway. This five day trip covered 206 miles total (plus any extra miles due to getting lost...). The grueling journey was overcome by fifteen hardy ninth grade bikers, their three bold faculty advisors, and their illustrious student-leader. There were daily challenges encountered by these 19 battle-hardened and intrepid cyclists. A passing motorist may have mistaken the colored and safety triangle adorned blur blazing by them to be practicing Tour de France riders on the end of stage sprint.

On Wednesday and Thursday, there were numerous hills in the Adirondacks where they strove mightily up the ascents. These magnificent ascensions were adorned fittingly with ice cream stops, melodious unison, and screaming descents. All in all the bike trip tested the abilities of all students who in the end overcame the toughest E-Week VCS has ever offered; and did so in such a positive way never before seen in such magnificent splendor!



# Acadia

We had an amazing week DownEast! After an 8-hour trip east to Mount Desert Island, we arrived at Blackwoods campground in Acadia National Park. After we set up camp, we walked a couple of hundred yards to the rocky coast to sit over the waves, under the Milky Way. Tuesday was a bit drizzly as we climbed Flying Mountain over the only fjord in North America and fed the critters in Anemone Cave. Wednesday was beautiful as we took our traditional dip in the North Atlantic (water temp of AT LEAST 55 degrees!!) and spent a contemplative solo hour at the Great Head tide pools. After lunch, the team made it up the precipitous Beehive with great spirits intact. Thursday morning was volunteer trail-work with Friends of Acadia, followed by a naturalist's tour of the waters around Bah Hahbah. The day ended with a Lobstah bash and stroll around town. Friday morning we were the first North Americans to see the sunrise from Cadillac Mountain. A great trip all-around!!



# New York City

by Eli Hulse '15

For our encounter week, we went to New York City to explore the rough urban environment. Our group of 9 kids looked at real “Modern Art” in a variety of museums and private collections.

On our first day, upon arrival at the plaza, we had tea with Eloise and President Obama. Eloise was bored and Obama was extremely pre-occupied as he was headed to the UN Summit on Climate Change. It seems that the climate changing was more important than talking to learned prep school kids because his security entourage escorted us to the Ritz-Carlton, where we were appointed relatively decent accommodations.

On Tuesday we met with Jeff Koons, an okay artist who gave us a personal tour of his little show at the Whitney. There were a lot of things that looked like animal balloons there. Ben said it was “modern art”. The balloons scared some of the kids.

Wednesday was a new day, and we took an underground subway train (it traveled underneath the streets!) to the base of the Ronald Regan Building. The Ronald Regan Building is really tall with 592 stories, but we were only allowed access to the 583rd story because the republicans have been occupying the top 1% of the building since the 99% have been occupying Wall Street. We also went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art where we saw some really old art that was not modern. Unfortunately, due to congestion at JFK, we took stretch Hummers back to Vermont, but we enjoyed plasma TVs and the comfort of leather seats. The Hummers had an ecoboost option on the engine that extended our MPG to 10 miles a gallon, truly supporting our sustainability mission. Thank god for modern technology!

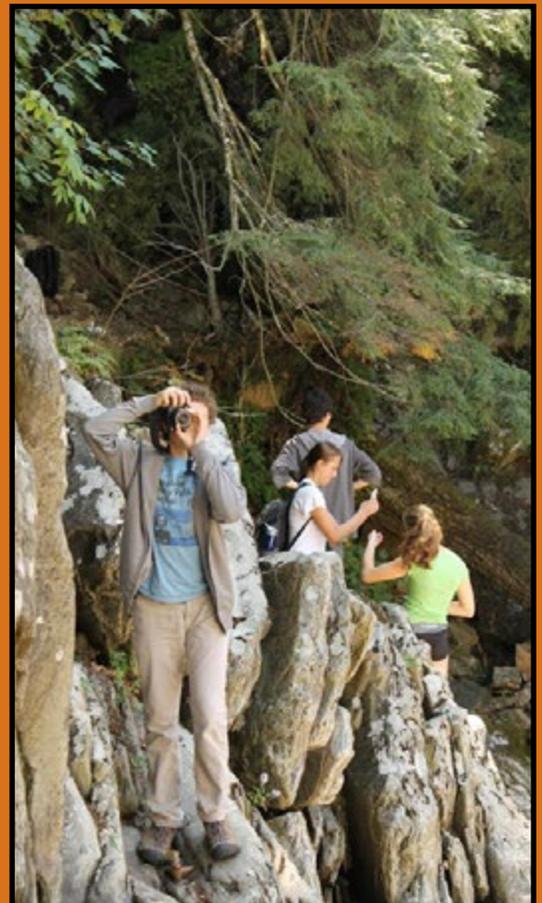
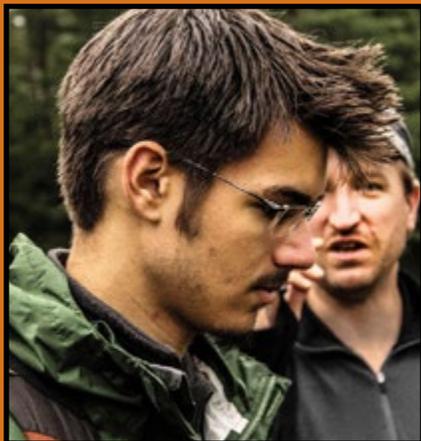
Overall we found this encounter week to be adequate, but next time we hope for better accommodations and a reservation at Daniels, our favorite French restaurant.



# Day Hikes

by Ben Maksym '16

On the Day-Hikes E-week, we spent every day hiking a different trail or mountain. On Monday, we took a trip to the Waterbury Nature Center to do a history-oriented hike; the group looked at barn foundations and grave-sites. On Tuesday, Bradley took us to the VYCC (Vermont Youth Conservation Corps) trails. We started at the barn where they have their headquarters and also learned a bit about tracking! On Wednesday, Adriana switched with Jess, and we did Rattlesnake Cliffs, a trail that was closed in the summer for falcon mating and has an amazing view of Lake Dunmore! Thursday was very wet and a bit chilly, but we soldiered on in spite of the difficulties and made it to Sterling Pond in Cambridge. Finally, on Friday, we did the Honey Hollow trail in Richmond; it was the longest hike of the week, but we still managed to do it before lunch!



# Sailing

Under the excellent student leadership of Mikhal, nine sailors, including Liam, Zac, Zachary, Meika, Mason, Nick, Aiden, Hans, and Rainer, spent their Fall Encounter Week at the Community Sailing Center. Faculty sailors included Hua on Monday and Tuesday, Bradley on Wednesday, and Jennifer on Thursday and Friday. The students developed leadership, teamwork, and sailing skills while rigging and sailing boats on Lake Champlain. Working with the sailing instructors and the faculty leaders, Mikhal assigned the students to different boats each day. The VCS sailors had ideal fall sailing conditions with cool temperatures, consistent winds (5-15 knots) and some brilliant sunshine. By the end of the week, all students demonstrated proficiency with basic sailing skills, including knot tying, rigging, points of sail, sail trim, tacking and jibing, navigation rules, docking and mooring. On the final day, the VCS sailors dazzled their CSC Sailing Instructors with spaghetti knot tying and passionate readings of their own sailing poetry.



# Adirondack Backpacking

by Nimaya '17, Nora '15, and Sean '17

A river did we ford  
Where Ben Wang went overboard  
While we slept, chilly in our knickers  
Mice feasted on our Snickers

In the row boats we crossed the river  
After braving the bog we had the shivers  
Tired backs all slumping  
Later we went rock jumping

Our ventures ended with a game  
Mafia was the name  
Beside a stubborn unlit fire  
Eyes closed, everyone began to tire

We trekked and slogged six more miles  
Finally at camp we all were smiles  
Some managed a 4am wake up call  
To hike and see the morning fall

A five hour bus ride home  
No more trails to roam  
Overall content, but beat  
Left with memories so sweet.



# Adirondack Canoeing

The river runs ever on, but we paddled it anyway! A fellowship of ten strapping young adventurers and their hardy boat captains spent their Fall Encounter Week journeying from Long Lake to Tupper Lake in the Adirondacks. After tarp-sailing (yes, tarp-sailing!) down Long Lake on Monday, the crew spent most of the week on the gentle Raquette River, which carried them just south of the famous High Peaks region. They braved threats of bears, a mile-long portage around the crashing falls, low-hanging branches, and the cold September nights before their pickup on Friday in the town of Tupper Lake. On the way, they enjoyed near-constant sunshine, innumerable games of Contact and Hearts, the din of the rapids, and an unforgettable view of the starry wilderness sky. As the journey neared its end on Thursday, the group was nearly forced to sacrifice Danny to the gods of the Bay of Misery, but they appeared to be sufficiently satisfied with Darien's anti-wind dance.

It was a spectacular week, with plenty of laughs, led by two superb student leaders (Jamie and Anna Lefler), and permeated by an intractable spirit of adventure and relaxation from everyone aboard.



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