

February 21, 2012

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 22

Teachers/Parents
vs. Students Basketball
Game 3:45-5:15 PM

February 27-March 5

February Break

March 15

PACS Coffee
Hour 7:45-8:45 AM

March 22

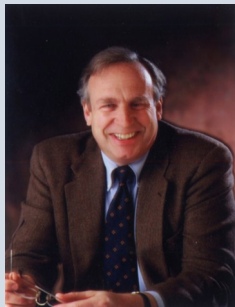
Second Evening
of Readings K-Z
6-8 PM

Parent Forum Follow Up –by Peter Gilmore



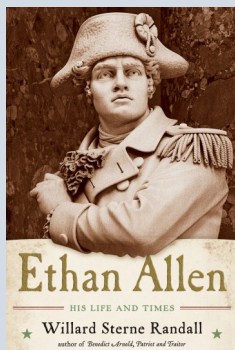
The Parent Forum that took place on February 2nd was an open evening of sharing between VCS administrators and the forty parent participants who attended. Each year we lend an ear to our families so that they can let us know the things we are doing well, and the things we really need to work on doing better. This year was no different as topics such as Communications, Parenting Education, Core Group E-weeks, and Wellness were openly discussed. Chance, Cara, and I took copious notes on the many suggestions and have transferred them to running agendas in the various committees responsible for reviewing them. There were some great ideas, and we appreciated the feedback. Thanks!

Common Hour on March 7th –by Sarah Soule



Parents are invited to attend the Wednesday, March 7th Common Hour at 9:40 a.m. when noted author, **Willard Sterne Randall** speaks to the VCS community about his new book, ***Ethan Allen: His Life and Times*** (2011). It is a portrait of the flamboyant guerilla fighter and Vermont patriot, Ethan Allen, a hero of the American Revolution, who has always been defined by his daring, pre-dawn attack on the British-controlled Fort Ticonderoga.

Will Randall will share insights about one of Vermont's original and largely unexamined patriots, Ethan Allen, and will trace his beginnings back to his modest origins in Connecticut, and forward to his crusade to secure Vermont's independence from New York as a state in its own right. Randall's previous books include *A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son* (1984), *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor* (1990), a New York Times Notable Book, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life* (1993), *George Washington: A Life* (1998), *Forgotten Americans: Footnote Figures Who Changed American History* (1999), and *Alexander Hamilton: A Life* (2003).



Randall is Visiting Professor of Humanities at Champlain College. A contributing editor to American Heritage Magazine and MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History, he regularly reviews biographies for the Philadelphia Inquirer, Boston Globe and Journal of American History. The author will have copies of the book available at the conclusion of Common Hour for signing for those interested.

VCS Basketball Team Takes on Parents and Teachers!

–by Chance Cardamone-Knewstubb



This Wednesday the basketball team will wrap up it's season with a grand finale. It will be the team vs. VCS parents and teachers. The old folks team could really use some more able bodies and no experience is necessary. Please come and play on Wednesday, February 22nd from 3:45 - 5:15 PM at The Sports & Fitness Edge in South Burlington!

Moving Forward with Community Engagement! –by Mark Cline Lucey

Sunday was a big day for the strategic planning and forward momentum of Vermont Commons School. A group of fifteen people gathered at the lovely Orchard Cove House at Shelburne Farms to develop a common vision and plan of action for the Community Engagement pillar of the 2010-2015 VCS Strategic Plan. The VCS Vision Statement declares that we will be “a national leader among independent schools, recognized for connecting our classrooms to our communities.” We asked ourselves, “What bold steps will we need to take to engage our students and classrooms with the local and global communities SO WELL that we become a model for schools across the nation to follow?”

Why community engagement? At Vermont Commons School we believe that the component pedagogies of true community engagement - service learning, systems thinking, place-based learning, environmental education, interdisciplinary learning, along with a student-centered school community – will help nurture and empower students and their communities.

Our plan is to weave these practices across the curriculum and into the everyday experience of our students over the next few years.



The group represented a cross-section of the VCS community. Five students were present: Nick Sears ('16), Nora Hill ('15), Miles Lamberson ('14), Katiya Boudette ('13), and Maddy Roberts ('13). Four parents joined us: Melanie Goodman, Martha Maksym, Lee McIsaac, and Derrick Senior. Rebecca Coll, also a parent as well as the Chair of the Board of Trustees, drove up from Boston to participate. Faculty and administration included Christie Beveridge, Peter Gilmore, Bradley Materick and myself,

Mark Cline Lucey. Finally, we were incredibly fortunate to be joined by Jennifer Cirillo, Director of Professional Development and coordinator of the Sustainable Schools Project at Shelburne Farms.

Melanie Goodman, mother of Chloe ('15), facilitated the retreat and deftly moved us from the big picture vision to a concrete action plan. Derrick Senior, father of Ryan ('17), used his long experience with goal setting to get us all thinking about the power of setting goals and following through on them. Thank you to both of them and to Rebecca Coll for helping to organize this successful retreat.

With the support of the Trustees, the leadership of the administration, the dedication and creative energy of the faculty, and the engaged, dynamic student body, Vermont Commons School is poised to lead the way in shaping tomorrow's leaders.

College Corner –by Sarah Soule



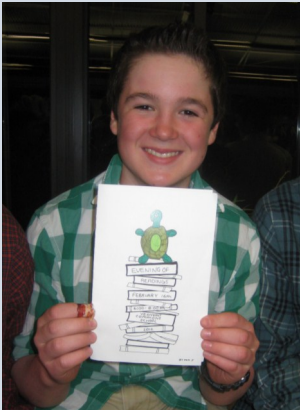
College Counseling Update:

The junior class is reminded to log on to Naviance and to register for the upcoming spring ACT and SAT tests as deadlines are fast approaching. Our school code is 460 417. Please see Sarah Soule with any questions you might have.

Friday, March 9, 2012 - Registration Deadline for April ACT
www.actstudent.org

Friday, April 6, 2012 - Registration Deadline for May SAT
www.collegeboard.com

This Week in Photos



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