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FEBRUARY 21ST, 2017

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 23rd**  
Parent Coffee w/  
Dexter and the Faculty

**February 24th**  
World Language  
Celebration Day

**February 24th**  
Movie Night - *Doctor Strange*  
in the Commons Room

**Feb. 28th - Mar. 5th**  
February Break

## Citizen-Journalism Opportunity

by Mark Cline Lucey

This past Fall Encounter Week I fulfilled a personal dream and took twelve VCS students and a pile of video equipment on the road to do in-depth student journalism. Our “documentary road trip” brought us all over Vermont to talk to people on all sides of the ridgeline wind issue. The person who made this trip possible with her expertise, boundless energy, and general brilliance was Mary Simons who has an awesome program called Conversations From the Open Road. Mary runs journalistic adventures like this all through the spring and summer for Vermont students. I just have to pass word of this amazing opportunity along to all of you. Below is from Mary:

*Conversations From The Open Road is an opportunity for Vermont high school and college students to experience, and compassionately participate in, our world in a meaningful way. We are a traveling citizen-journalism, digital storytelling media program engaging with communities on the front lines of significant economic-environmental-cultural justice issues. By the end of each two-week exploration, each student creates a documentary short about a thread of the people, place and struggle. Together, this collection becomes a reflection of this moment for a particular community. Please check our website for info, applications and contact email.*

### April 18-30: Clarksdale, Mississippi

Learn about the Blues! (1 spot remaining)

We are traveling to the Mississippi Delta to learn how a place and its people, a long thread from the past into the present, have shaped a musical tradition: the Blues. This is a partnership with Champlain Valley Union’s Nexus Program.

### July 7-21: Santa Fe, New Mexico

Learn the pioneering efforts to see addiction as a health care concern instead of criminal justice (5 spots remaining)

There are a few cities in our country transforming how we understand and treat people with addictions. Santa Fe is one of these inspiring places (along with Seattle, Albany, Ithaca, and Gloucester, Mass). Students will travel to this beautiful part of our country to learn from the individuals and the community initiating this change. We will thread these stories together, while indulging in the cultural influences and the carved landscapes of the American Southwest. As a crew, we will be part of this cultural change here in Vermont! We have been invited to be part of a team, led by Attorney General TJ Donovan, who will be tour the state and talking with communities about this compassionate turn in how a community cares for this growing epidemic.

### August 11-25: Minnesota

From Standing Rock and beyond! (6 spots remaining)

More than 10,000 people came to show solidarity with the people of the Standing Rock Sioux, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline proposed to be built under the Missouri River, within their reservation’s lands. This is THE largest congregation of Native Americans and allies in a century! The rippling effects of this movement is palpable. We will travel to another battle gaining momentum in the indigenous community’s fight to assert their sovereignty and basic rights. Indigenous Americans “en masse wild rice harvest” in late August in northern Minnesota will most likely continue the battle in court as an important test case about treaty rights.

Leech Lake Ojibwe band member Arthur LaRose, chairman of the 1855 Treaty Authority, has said that his group’s concerns go beyond ricing, fishing and hunting. “From pipelines, to wild rice and walleye, the State of Minnesota does not appear to be protectively regulating the natural resources,” LaRose wrote to Governor Mark Dayton.

# Spectrum Sleep-Out, March 24th

by Amira Silverman

On **March 24th**, VCS students and faculty will be sleeping outside to raise awareness and funds for homeless youth in the Burlington area. Spectrum is a wonderful local organization that we've partnered with often before, and we are so excited to be supporting them again.

Join us for discussion, hot chocolate, and a slightly chilly night, or donate to [our page](#).



# Climate Change and Journalism Meets with 350VT

by Christie Beveridge

On Thursday, February 16, students in Christie's Climate Change and Journalism class met with Jen Lazar, volunteer coordinator at 350VT, at their office in Burlington. 350VT is a hub for climate change activism on all fronts, from education, to lobbying, to hosting events, and to organizing protests and rallies. Our class is partnering with 350VT to help them tell the stories of climate change in our state, around the country, and around the world. During the visit, students shared what

they think about when they hear the words "climate change" and "justice", and learned about the "Four R's" of social activism: resist, reform, recreate, and re-imagine. We are planning subsequent visits to 350VT to learn more about what they do, to help them publicize the upcoming events they are coordinating, and to connect with people in the community whom we can interview to tell the local and national stories of climate change.



# Students Share Writing at the Evening of Readings

by Christie Beveridge

Family members, friends, and faculty gathered in the common room on the evening of February 16 to hear the writing of students from grades six to twelve. The audience was treated to a wonderful array of poems, excerpts from short stories, and memoirs that students have written (and revised!)

during this year's English classes. Students with the last names M-Z will be sharing their work at the next Evening of Readings, which will take place on **March 21st**, the same evening as the Community Potluck. Stay tuned for more details after February break.

# Call for Musical Instruments

by Matt Davide

The 8th grade music class has been busy this semester learning about instruments, listening to a range of music from The Who to Stevie Wonder to Snarky Puppy, and learning about the inner workings of music theory! As we begin to focus more on the performance side of music I'm hoping some folks may have a spare instrument in their basement collecting dust that they would like to lend to VCS for our class (as well as band after school on Tuesdays). Here's what we're looking for:

- 2 Acoustic guitars
- 2 Electric guitars
- 1 Bass guitar

- 2 guitar amps
- 1 Bass Amp -or-
- 1 Multipurpose (keyboard) amp

Even if something isn't in perfect working order it could still be of use. Thanks!

# Running for Refugees

by Christie Beveridge

I will be running the Burlington Marathon again this year in order to raise money for the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, and would love your support. Suggested donation: \$26.20, or a dollar per mile!

[Visit my Crowdrise fundraising page](#)

# Upcoming Big Trips!

*by Dexter Mahaffey*

We are happy to announce the new Big and Little Trips for the coming year! All take place during normally scheduled Encounter Weeks (with international trips grabbing a day or two extra). We work hard to keep the cost of Big Trips below \$2500; Little Trips cost between about \$300 and \$1000. All trip groups have the opportunity to fund-raise to lower those expenses and typically do so quite successfully.

## May 2017 - Lima, Peru

This Big Trip will send students to our Sister School Colegio Santa Ana in Lima, Peru, led by Chance and Adriana. Normally we like more lead time for a trip, but our two schools' schedules make this the best time to go. This trip is open to students who are currently in grades 9-12 and not already signed up for the China or Crow Canyon trips in May.

## February 2018 - St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

This will be a service learning/camping Little Trip to the National Park in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, led by Peter and Jennifer, and open to students who will be in grades 8-12 next year, with priority given to high school students.

## May 2018 - Morocco

This Big Trip to Morocco will be led by Jory (who lived and studied there) and Ben Wang, and is open to students who will be in grades 8-12 next year, with priority given to high school students.

## September 2017 - New York City

This will be an arts- and music-focused Little Trip to New York City, led by Ben Patrick and Diana Guyer, and is open to students who will be in grades 10-12 next year.

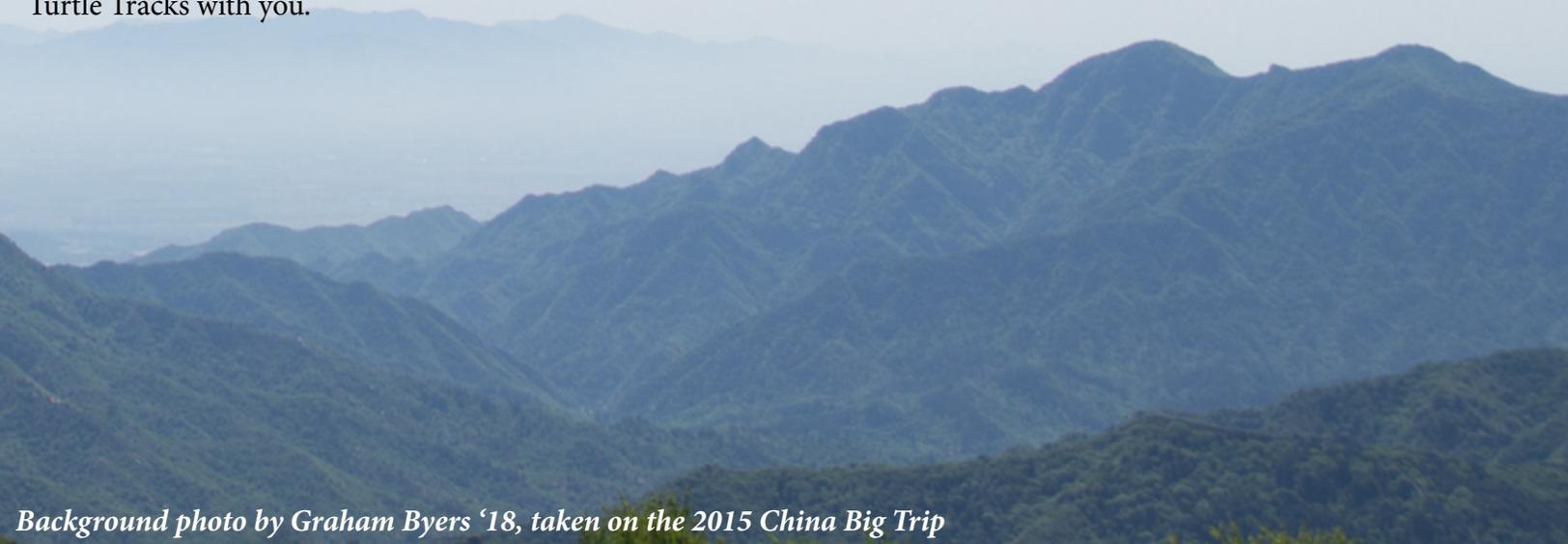
## February 2018 - Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec

A backcountry skiing expedition to Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula, this Little Trip will be led by Ben Wang and Christie, and is open to students who will be in grades 7-12 next year.

## May 2018 - Teton Science School, Wyoming

Last but not least, we will also offer an environmental studies Big Trip to the Teton Science School in Jackson, Wyoming, led by Mark Keegan and Kris, and open to students who will be in grades 7-12 next year.

Trip leaders will be sharing more information, including trip descriptions and projected costs, later this week, and applications will begin shortly thereafter. We will share those details both in Morning Meetings with students and via email and Turtle Tracks with you.



*Background photo by Graham Byers '18, taken on the 2015 China Big Trip*

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