

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 28th - Nov. 2nd
Spirit Week

October 2nd
Grandparents' Day
& All- School Bonfire

October 3rd
SATs

October 8th
Parent/Advisor
Conferences

Students Explore the Current Refugee Crisis

Mark Cline Lucey

Juniors and seniors in Mark Cline Lucey's "Modern United States History in a Global Context" class role played the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees having an emergency meeting to discuss and attempt to resolve the humanitarian crisis that is the millions of refugees attempting to enter Europe after fleeing from Syria on Friday. The goal of this committee session was to establish a way to ensure humane conditions for refugees in existing camps, safe passage and asylum, and continued safety in Europe for refugees.

Drawing lessons from the post-World War II refugee crisis in Europe, and throughout the 20th century, the eighteen students in this class decided to explore the complexity of the current crisis via a Model United Nations format. Two student, Ceile Kronick '17 and Anna Leffler '18, served as the committee chairs, and the other sixteen students all represented countries involved in the current situation in Europe and the Middle East.

Some of the students are old hats at Model UN, and for others this was their first time. All agreed that this was a great way to gain a sense of the complexity and range of perspectives on an international issue like this one.



VCS Student Senate Blog Now Live

Jordan Cannon

The VCS Student Senate is excited to announce the new Student Senate Blog, which we will use to communicate updates to the community. Each week, we'll post an agenda for the upcoming meeting and minutes afterward, as well as any other updates or announcement. You can find it [here!](#)



After School Study Hall Starts This Week

Please join Jess in Room 222 Monday and Thursday afternoons from 3:35-4:30 to jam out on your fun homework! Attendees are encouraged to ask questions, do lots of math practice, write their next essay draft, and organize their binders. Word is out that an upperclass person will be there to help out!! See you next Monday!

Fall Open House - Sunday, Nov. 8th

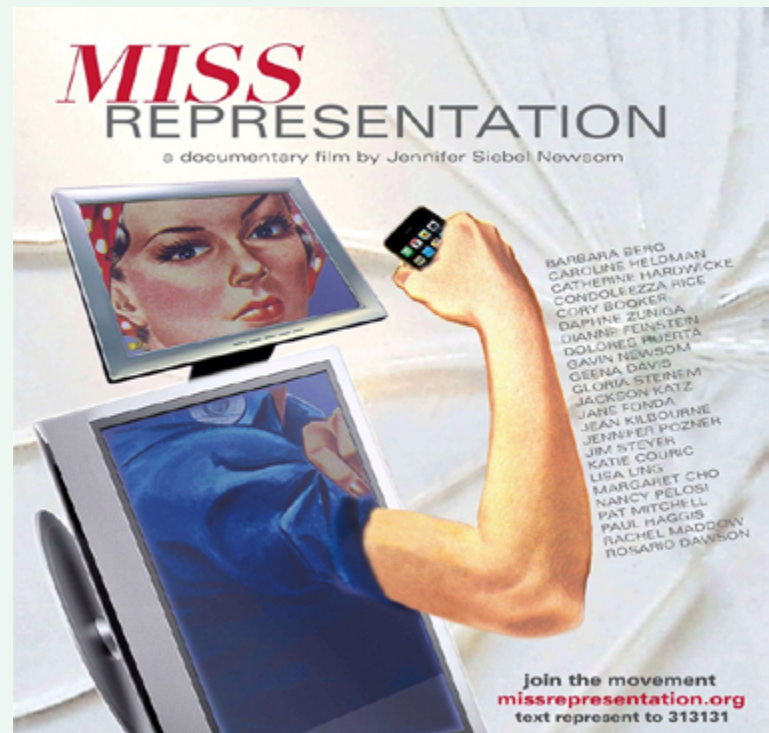
A quick reminder that our Fall Open House is coming up! It will take place on Sunday, November 8th from 1-3pm, and is open to the public.

Current families are encouraged to please spread the word to your friends and family - particularly parents & students looking for a new educational experience!

Documentary Film Series

The Mask You Live In was shown Friday night to a crowd of over 50 VCS community members as well as some folks from the wider public. Many thanks to Jo Astill-Vaccaro, Chance and Steve for leading a great discussion after the screening. Thank you as well to Jo for the incredible dinner she provided for sale. Many partook and enjoyed conversation with friends and newcomers prior to the movie.

Remember, we will be showing the "sister" film *Miss Representation* on Friday, October 16th. Dinner will be available for sale from 5:30-6:30 with the screening thereafter. Come and join us to learn how mainstream media contributes to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America.



Community Hike

Jill Strawbridge

All parents are invited to join me for a fun hike on Wednesday, October 21st -- let's spend a crisp fall day together! Enjoy fabulous foliage while catching up with other parents. Hikers will depart from VCS at 9am. Please let me know if you are able join us.

Hike for Hunger

Mark Cline Lucey

Our Hungry Turtles team attended the Hike for Hunger this past weekend, helping to raise \$650 to alleviate hunger from families all throughout Vermont! Special thanks to Lena & Susan, Phoebe & Dana, LaTrisha & Jalen, and Seth & Michele.



Global March for the Elephants and Rhinos - Sunday, October 4th

Taegen Yardley, VCS '21

Please join us for Burlington's first Global March for the Elephants and Rhinos on October 4th in Burlington. For the first time, Vermonters will be able to march in solidarity with thousands of people around the world who will march as one voice, in over 130 marches held across the globe to put an end to the ivory and rhino horn trade. Unless action is taken now, we will lose these majestic and intelligent creatures in just 5-10 years.

BACKGROUND: My name is Taegen Yardley. I am a 7th grader from Charlotte. I first became passionate about saving elephants in 2013 when I was invited by wildlife activists Ashley McAvey and Laurel Neme to help with a bake sale to raise money to help save the elephants. Along with several other students, I cooked baked goods to sell at a screening of the documentary "Battle for the Elephants" at UVM. The documentary "Battle for the Elephants" had an enormous impact on me and made me want to act in their defense. I spent a lot of time on the website 96elephants.org educating myself on the importance of keeping elephants on this planet.

This past April I was fortunate enough to be able to testify at the Vermont State House in support of bill H.297 which would ban the sale of ivory in Vermont. This experience motivated me to find other ways to continue to fight for the elephants. I had the opportunity to participate in a Skype session with children in Hong Kong who are also working to help save the elephants. It was great to learn that there are children in other parts of the world who are fighting for the same cause! Since April I have been working to make this march a reality. We now have representatives from 15 schools around Vermont who are helping to raise awareness about this event and this cause.

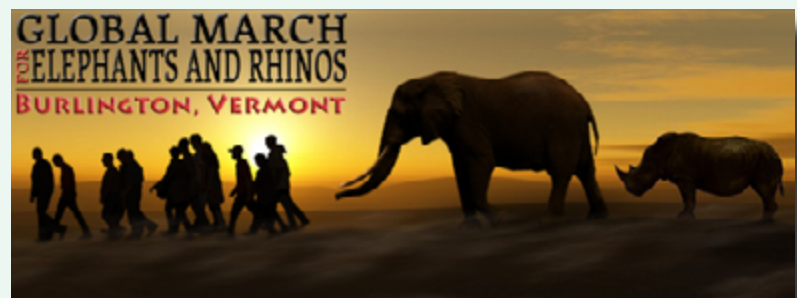
Here are some facts about the impact the world would see with the extinction of these species...

- An average of 96 elephants are killed each and every day. That's one every fifteen minutes. At this rate, elephants will become extinct within five to ten years.
- Elephants are gentle, intelligent creatures that live together in families. They care for each other and for their children the same way that human beings do.
- They play an important role in protecting the ecosystems in which they live.
- The rain forests in Central Africa are one of our most important resources in fighting climate change. Elephants spread seeds throughout the land, which helps new plants and seeds to grow. The seeds of almost 100 different kinds of trees must pass through the gut on an elephant in order to germinate. Without elephants, African forests will die.
- Research shows that they are altruistic creatures meaning that they have a selfless concern for the welfare of others. What does it say for people if we can't look out for them the way they are able to look out for us.
- Many animals and plants depend on them for survival. They clear bush for plants to grow and to form pathways and waterholes for smaller animals.
- A rhino is slaughtered once every eight hours for its horn.
- The Northern White Rhino may become extinct very soon with only five left in the world.
- The Western Black Rhino became extinct in 2011
- These animals are being brutally killed for their ivory tusks and horns that end up on the black market and fund terrorist organizations – all because of greed.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN BE AN ELEPHANT ACTIVIST:

- TALK to your friends, parents and teachers. Spread the word!
- Visit www.96elephants.org to educate yourself.
- Visit www.ivoryfreevermont.org. Here you can find information on how to contact Chairman David Deen. Tell him that you support a full ban on ivory and rhino horn sales in the state of VT.
- MAKE A TUSK TO CARRY WITH YOU IN THE PARADE – You can e-mail tyardley@vermontcommons.org for an instruction sheet.
- ATTEND: the Global March for Elephants & Rhinos
Burlington - Sunday, October 4th
Gather at Burlington City Hall at 11:00 a.m.
The march will begin at 11:30
Rally will begin at noon with African drumming by Jeh Kulu

We hope to see you there!



Mooncake Making

Hua Zhang

The seventh-grade “Introduction to World Languages” class celebrated a traditional Chinese holiday, the Mid-Autumn Festival, this week. We learned about the legends associated with this holiday and acted them out in the new performance arts room.

Sheridan played the Jade Emperor. Lilah played the Queen Mother. Charlie was the Jade Rabbit. Ezra was Hou Yi, an archer who shot down 9 suns. And Maya was his beautiful wife, Lady Chang'e, who flew to the moon. Will played Wu Gang, the divine medicine

maker who was condemned to cut down the sweet olive tree forever. Clara, Sophie and Austin played other various parts.

The class also read about the origin of the mooncake and made ice skin mooncakes in school on Thursday.

Students will be watching the full moon with their families on Sunday night, sharing stories and customs, celebrating the season and thinking of their faraway relatives and friends, and wishing everyone the best.



Prelude to a Water Melody

Su Shi (1037-1101 AD)

人有悲欢离合，月有阴晴圆缺，此事古难全。
但愿人长久，千里共婵娟。

Translation

Ben Wang

The moon waxes, is full, and wanes;
and so, since the beginnings of humankind,
people meet in joy, and in sadness bid goodbye.
I only pray our lives be long,
and our sundered souls toward the moon fly.



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