



# NEWS & NOTES

October 15, 2021



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Friday, October 15 (TODAY!)

- 6:00-9:00pm: **All-School Bonfire (158 Charles Rd, Williston)**

### Saturday, October 16

- 11:30am-6:30pm: **Volleyball @ Mt. Mansfield - All teams!**

### Monday, October 18

- 4:30-8:00pm: **Varsity Volleyball @ Enosburg**

### Tuesday, October 19

- 4:30-7:30pm: **Boys Volleyball @ Essex**

### Wednesday, October 20

- 1:40-2:10: **Carleton College Visit**

### Thursday, October 21

- 8:30am-9:30: **Parent/Guardian Coffee**
- 10:00-10:30am: **University of Rochester Visit**
- 4:30-7:30pm: **Boys Varsity Volleyball @ BFA St. Albans**

### Friday, October 22

- 8:30-9:00am: **Reed College Visit**
- 3:30-6:00pm: **Corn Maze @ Sam Mazza's**
- 3:30-6:00pm: **Girls Volleyball @ Middlebury**
- 4:30-7:30pm: **Boys Volleyball @ Rice**

## Other Upcoming Social Events

**Corn Maze @ Sam Mazza's – Friday, October 22 – 3:30-6:00** (Additional information below.)

**Pumpkin Carving – Friday, October 29 – 3:30-4:30** (Bring your own pumpkin!)

## Upcoming Parent Coffee

Please mark your calendar for Parent Coffee next week on Thursday, October 21st at 8:30am. Join us to connect with other parents and to say 'hi' to folks you haven't seen for awhile! We'd love to see you! An added bonus: Jasmine and Katherine will also be on hand to answer any questions you may have about academics or RenWeb. Hope to have you attend. Enjoy your weekend -- Jill

## Upcoming College Visits for October

College Visits are primarily Virtual Visits this year, so please [email Marta](#) to register and get the Zoom link ahead of time. This is a great opportunity for both Juniors and Seniors to connect with the Regional Rep and learn more about a college or a university. Once you have registered for a college visit, please plan on attending as the College Rep will be expecting you.

- Weds. 10/20 @ 1:40, Carleton College
- Thurs. 10/21 @ 10:00, University of Rochester
- Fri. 10/22 @ 8:30, Reed College
- Thurs. 10/28 @ 10:00, Dickinson College

## Learning Ally Now at VCS

Great news! All VCS students will soon be given free access to Learning Ally - a vast online library of audio books.

With an extensive library of high quality, human-read audiobooks, student-centric features and a suite of teacher resources, the Learning Ally solution provides access to our curriculum in a format all readers can easily absorb, allowing them to achieve their academic potential.

No worries—listening to human-read audiobooks is not cheating. Actually, they are proven to help kids reach their academic potential. Audiobooks take away the stress of reading and allow students to successfully access grade level materials. Using the Learning Ally Audiobook Solution cuts down on homework time and increases engagement, confidence and academic success.

Your student will soon receive an email from Learning Ally letting them know that they qualify, as a VCS student, to use the solution. Please encourage your student to look out for that email and to set up an account.

If you have any questions about Learning Ally, please email [Courtney Lamontagne](#), Learning Specialist.

## Corn Maze @ Sam Mazza's

We're planning to take a group of students to brave the mighty corn maze! To plan adequately, students must **pre-register** by emailing [Tim](#) or talking to him at school no later than Wednesday afternoon for the sake of logistics. We will take a bus from school on Friday afternoon, arriving back at VCS at 5:45. Students can be picked up at Sam Mazza's by 5:15 or at VCS by 6:00. Students are responsible for the cost of the corn maze and any goodies that they get at the farm store.

## National Honor Society

Applications for the Vermont Commons chapter of the National Honor Society are currently available to interested 11th and 12th grade students who did not apply in the spring semester. The submission deadline for the Fall application cycle is Friday November 12th.

Membership in the National Honor Society recognizes students for excellence in four central pillars of student life: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. At VCS, chapter members take on responsibility for a number of service activities within and outside the school, such as peer tutoring, organizing food and clothing drives, and spearheading our Green-Up Day activities. More about NHS can be found at their website: [www.nhs.us](#)

Students wishing to apply should contact the NHS Chapter Adviser, [Mark Keegan](#), for application details.



## Printmaking Opportunity

There is an opportunity for interested students to attend a special silkscreening/ screen printing workshop at the Iskra printmaking collective in Burlington. If you are interested in this opportunity, email [Frances Cannon](#) and she will work towards setting a date. There are options for a short extracurricular workshop, for \$35, or a full day intensive, hands-on workshop, for \$100. [Here is the website for the venue](#) where you can find details about the location.

## LOGO DESIGN CONTEST

The yearbook committee is in search of  
a new logo for the yearbook!

You can design up to 3 logos that represent VCS school spirit.  
Feel free to include shelly the turtle or that we are celebrating 25 years!  
Anywhere your creativity takes you!

We would appreciate simple detail and the use of a single color.

Deadline: November 4, 2021

Please submit your design image(s) to Frances at:  
[fcannon@vermontcommons.org](mailto:fcannon@vermontcommons.org)

For more information, feel free to contact either Frances or Amy at:  
[fcannon@vermontcommons.org](mailto:fcannon@vermontcommons.org) or [awilliamson@vermontcommons.org](mailto:awilliamson@vermontcommons.org)

## News from Amber in Development

### 2nd Virtual Grandparents and GrandFriends Day a Success!

We were delighted to host nearly 60 Grandparents and friends today, with guests Zooming in from all over New England and as far away as California and the UK. Thanks to all of you—our faculty, students, and guests—for being part of this wonderful morning of learning, exploration, sharing, and reunion. We love our VCS grandparents!



## Invest in VCS

A grandparent remarked today on how much she enjoyed experiencing the spirit of VCS and feeling the sense of place that embodies our community. She went on to say that in a few short weeks her grandchild--a new VCS student--already feels part of our community. You can invest in our VCS community by making a gift to our Annual Fund, and help nurture this place and our people. Thank you!

[Give To Vermont Commons](#)

## Notes from the Head of School

My father's father was not exactly who you might describe as an easy person. Family lore casts him as exacting, short on praise or warmth, quick with a quip or critique, clear on what he expected others to do, particularly when it came to his own family. He made my father finish high school in three years, college in three years after that, and off to medical school right away, where the kind of doc my father was to become was prescribed beforehand. As a young couple, Era and I used to visit my grandfather regularly the first weeks when we'd moved close to where he lived for an early teaching job. Practically the first words out of his mouth each time to her were, "Got a job yet?" When she did a few weeks later, he was satisfied: subject closed.

He came by his terseness and toughness honestly, though. Born in Sturgeon, Owsley County, Kentucky, he was of rural Appalachia, riding a horse out of the mountains to study at Berea College, a school set up to educate the rural poor and that to this day has a cap on family income of its students, meaning you can't go there if your family has much money. The horse was an upgrade from his father, who a generation before had walked out of the hills on foot to go to Berea. If you're not familiar with Owsley County, a quick search will show you it has repeatedly been covered as the poorest county in the United States outside of Puerto Rico. It's always been that way, and it's likely not headed for a change. It's clear to me that my grandfather did not—could not—take things such as education, jobs, economic security, or security of any kind for certain, certainly not for granted. His way was to forge a path, then create one for his boys and assume they would follow it. My father was a good bit gentler, although neither of my parents let go of the central importance of education, seeing that as the best chance for us.

For a month, when that teaching job I'd gotten was starting but Era and I couldn't get into our rental house, I lived with my grandfather, driving the thirty miles each way, on the interstate, over the Palisades of the Kentucky River to and from the school. At night we'd cook a meal together, watch the news and Jeopardy, and occasionally dip into conversations. Sometimes he'd pass me something to look at—old family photos or a book he thought I should know about. One night—and I can't remember if I came across it on a table and asked about it or if he showed it to me—we looked at his World War II journal. A small green pocket journal, he'd clearly intended to keep a daily record throughout his deployment. The first several pages describe making acquaintances with those in his unit during training, then they head into the combat zone, then the first page of details after the first battle, and the rest is blank. Like I said, he came by the terseness and toughness honestly.

He was a voracious reader and after the war became, like his Eastern Kentucky age-mate Jesse Stuart, a voracious traveler. His house was a museum of curios and collectibles, even if in later years he rarely ventured into it much. Mostly, he seemed a bit bemused by us and our youthful running around like headless chickens chasing after whatever it is we chase after, by the accelerated modernizing of the world. For all he'd seen, done, been through, when we knew him he lived pretty plainly and simply by choice, preferring his own sitting room, his own meals prepared by himself or at the nearby country restaurant (salty cornbread and beans were, by his account, his favorite meal), his own company or that of a friend or two, and a good college basketball game when in season.

One time Era and I drove him and his brother-in-law (whom we knew as Uncle Charles) up into the mountains to visit our cousin Bertha and other kin for Sunday dinner. The hillside farm, eked out of rough, steep mountain terrain, the piles of quilts made the traditional way by hand in company of others, the saltiest country ham and a table overflowing, and Bertha, the most gracious of hosts, similarly reserved, just as terse, but giving my grandfather a good ribbing throughout, and him deferring to her entirely. Tough as he might have been, she'd retired from teaching high school biology for decades, was brilliant, funny, eloquent, and entirely unintimidated, and he admired her entirely. As a matter of fact, Uncle Charles gave my grandfather a good ribbing as well, as par for the course. Uncle Charles liked to smile and laugh, even though he couldn't hear much of anything anymore by the time we got to know him as adults. The last of his family line besides his brother-in-law, he'd chosen to indulge in his 80s in a rather fast Mercedes, which, when Era asked just how fast he'd ever taken it, he suggested perhaps over 90 miles an hour, maybe a little faster, even. When we went with the two of them to Bertha's that Sunday, a beautiful fall Sunday at peak leaf season in the mountains, just like this week in Vermont, it was a stunning splendor of sun and bronze, orange, rust, golden yellow, and brown, and they let us drive, which felt safer at the time, but perhaps left less room for entertainment via Uncle Charles's speedy habits.

On this, Grandparents and Grand Friends Day, we recognize that who we are is not just where we're from or what we've done, or even who we've known. Who we are is also—in deep, powerful ways, beyond entirely knowing or describing—who we're from. I am from Hugh and Ruth Ann and Dexter and Mary Lydia, Logan and Anne Carter, and some of them I knew more and better, and to all of them and theirs before—and to all of you and yours, and yours before—I give thanks and praise in gratitude for our being.

[Amy's Bitmoji School Counseling Room](#)

[Guide for Students and Families](#)

[Core & Community Calendars 2021-2022](#)

[VCS Website](#)

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