

News & Notes

Vermont Commons School

February 19, 2021



UPCOMING EVENTS

To help combat the winter doldrums, the faculty are continuing to add social/community events to the [Community Calendar](#). Students should contact the hosting faculty member with any questions.

**Saturday, February 20th - Sunday, February 28th**

- February Break - VCS CLOSED

**Thursday, March 4th**

- 7pm - 8pm: **Evening of Readings I** (details below)

**Friday, March 5th**

- Progress reports & small comments sent home**
- 9am - 10am: **Parent/Guardian Coffee Social** ([Zoom link here](#), or check Community Calendar)

You can view all of our upcoming events on the [Calendars](#) page of our website, and find updated Zoom links by clicking "More Details" under individual events.

Amy's School Counseling Office

Virtual IT Help Request

IMPORTANT: Required Tech for In-Person HyFlex Classes

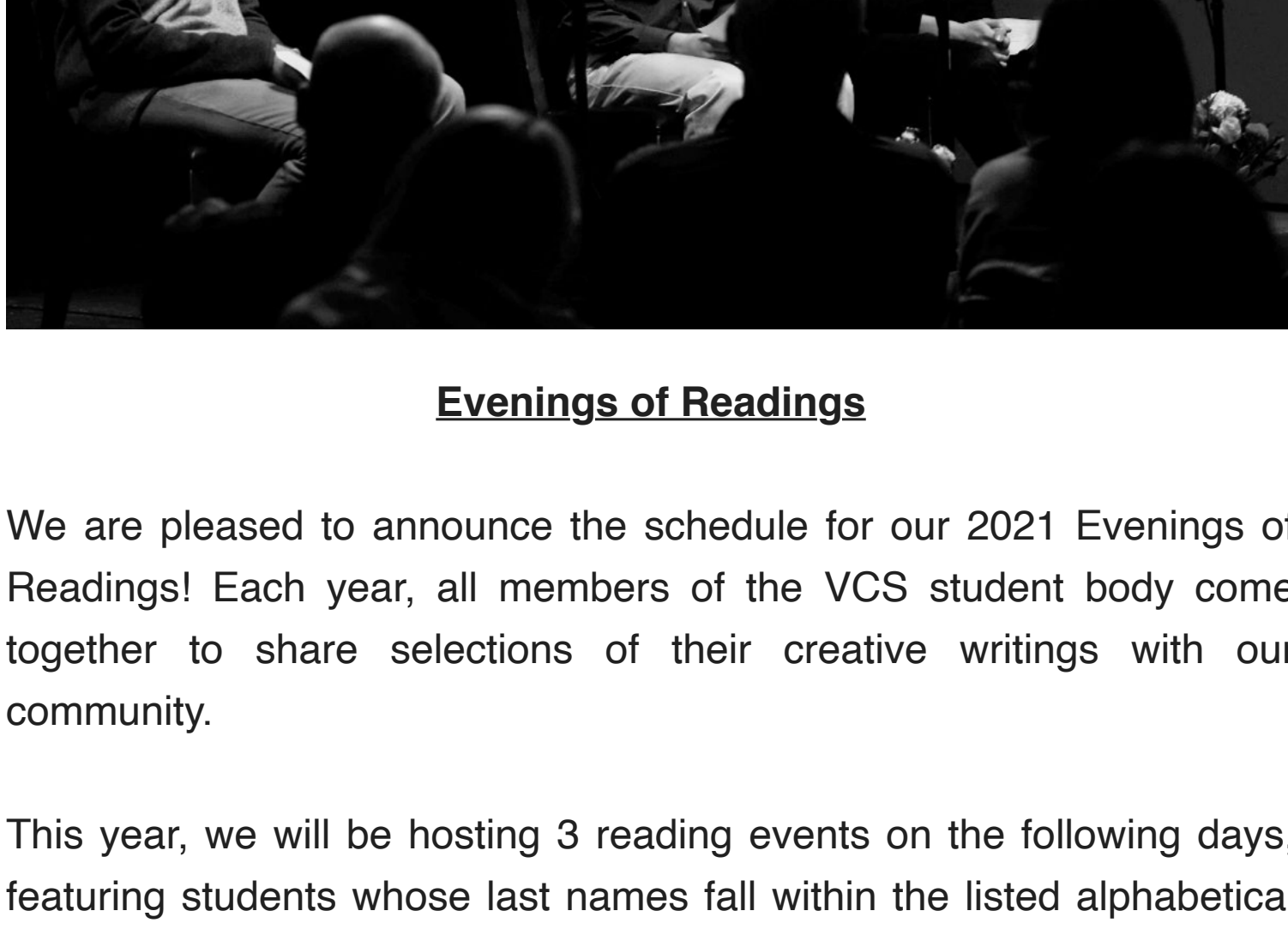
A reminder to all students & families planning to attend HyFlex classes in-person: each student **will need** the following tech in order to participate in class while in the building:

- A **laptop** with:
  - A functioning **camera**
  - The ability to run **Zoom** and any other software used in your classes
  - A **charger** (don't forget this!!)
- A set of **personal headphones** able to connect with the laptop

This technology will be most necessary for when you are on-campus, but your teacher is off-campus. This could be the case multiple times a day.

Due to covid regulations, we cannot offer short-term (single-day) loaner computers that could be shared by multiple students.

If you foresee any problems with acquiring this equipment, please reach out to me (Steve) at [slausier@vermontcommons.org](mailto:slausier@vermontcommons.org), or fill out the Virtual IT Help Request just above this announcement.



Evenings of Readings

We are pleased to announce the schedule for our 2021 Evenings of Readings! Each year, all members of the VCS student body come together to share selections of their creative writings with our community.

This year, we will be hosting 3 reading events on the following days, featuring students whose last names fall within the listed alphabetical range:

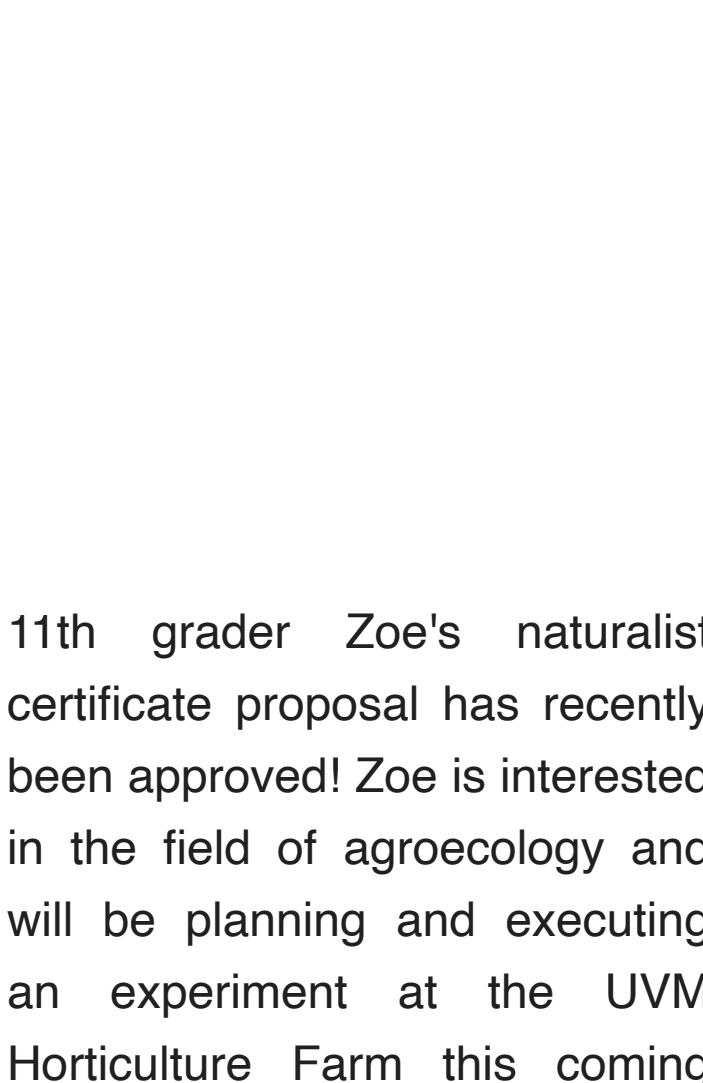
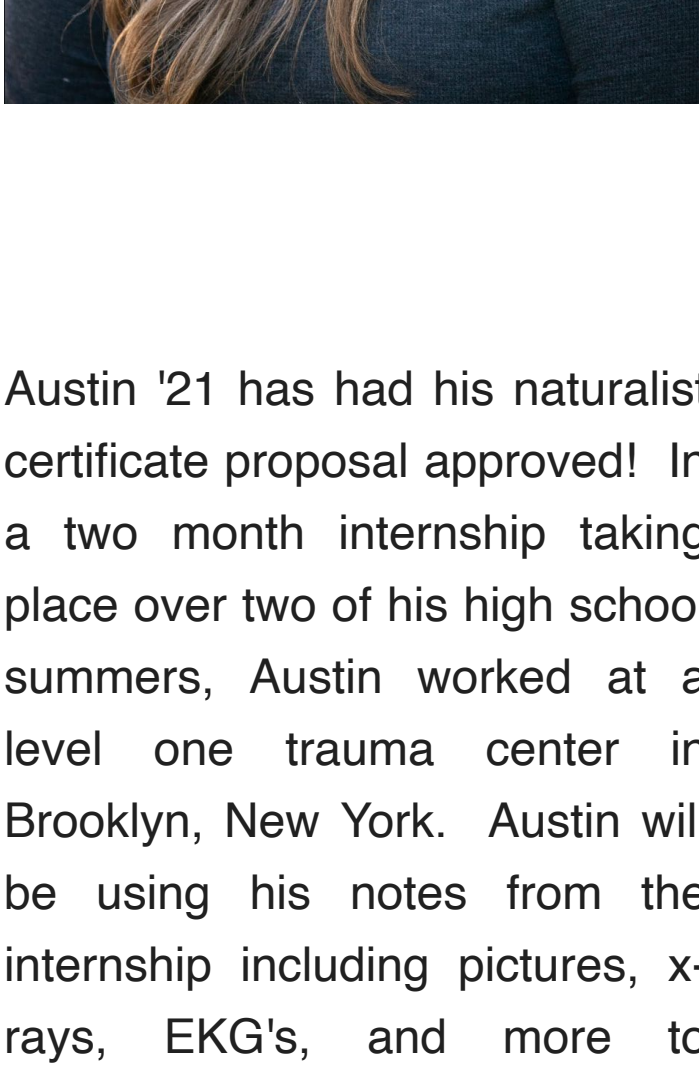
- March 4th:** Akazawa thru Hay
- March 11th:** Hecht thru Flawal
- March 18th:** Reiter thru Young

Each evening will **begin at 7pm**, ending approximately around 8pm. We will share Zoom links for accessing the readings as each evening approaches.

We look forward to sharing our students' work with you!

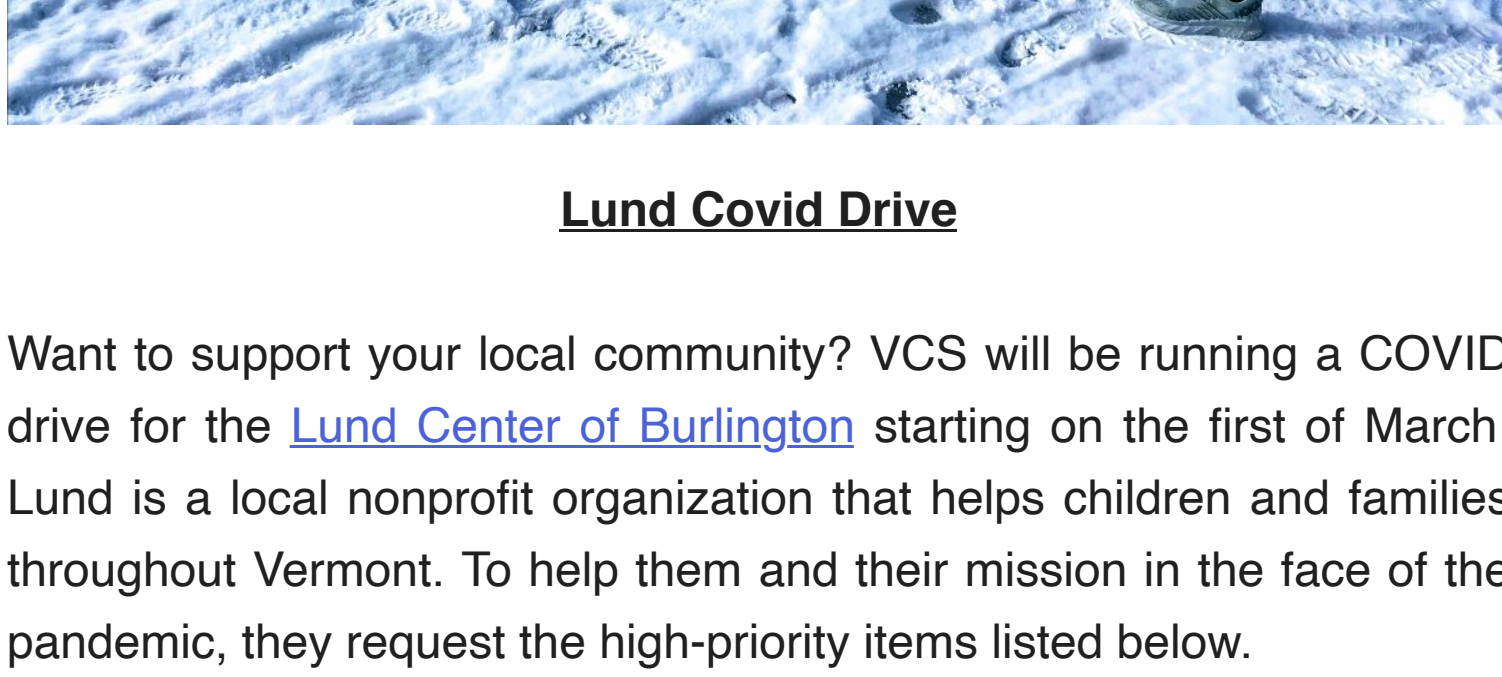
Approved Diploma Certificates

11th grader Tess has been approved to work on an Arts Certificate! For her certificate she will be diving into the art of playwriting and fully completing her own 3 act play. To prepare for playwriting she has been reading a selection of plays and instructional books detailing the structure and style of theatrical work. Upon completing her play, she will be directing a staged reading to take place for the community. We're so excited to see what she creates!



Austin '21 has had his naturalist certificate proposal approved! In a two month internship taking place over two of his high school summers, Austin worked at a level one trauma center in Brooklyn, New York. Austin will be using his notes from the internship including pictures, x-rays, EKG's, and more to facilitate a deep dive into the intricacies of human anatomy. He will create a multimedia video of his findings and research including interviews with his mentor Dr. Sigrid Wolfram. This video will also include information and examples from cases he saw when in the hospital. Good luck Austin!

11th grader Zoe's naturalist certificate proposal has recently been approved! Zoe is interested in the field of agroecology and will be planning and executing an experiment at the UVM Horticulture Farm this coming summer. She plans to test the soil nitrogen effects of different spring cover crops by examining the overall effect that those cover crops have on fall spinach. She has been working with Lindsey Ruhl, a researcher at Borderview Research Farm, to develop her experiment, as well as many other professionals in the field of agriculture. Good luck Zoe!



Lund Covid Drive

Want to support your local community? VCS will be running a COVID drive for the [Lund Center of Burlington](#) starting on the first of March! Lund is a local nonprofit organization that helps children and families throughout Vermont. To help them and their mission in the face of the pandemic, they request the high-priority items listed below.

**All items must be new, and supplied in their original unopened packaging!**

- Disposable gloves: small, medium, or large. Nitrile or latex-free.
- Disinfectant wipes
- Face Coverings:
  - N95 = Noish Certified
  - KN95
  - 3 layer disposable procedural masks
  - Cloth Face coverings: adult and child size
  - Face Shields or safety glasses
- Hand sanitizer (60% or higher alcohol content)
- Paper Towels (rolls)
- Tissues
- Laundry Detergent – liquid

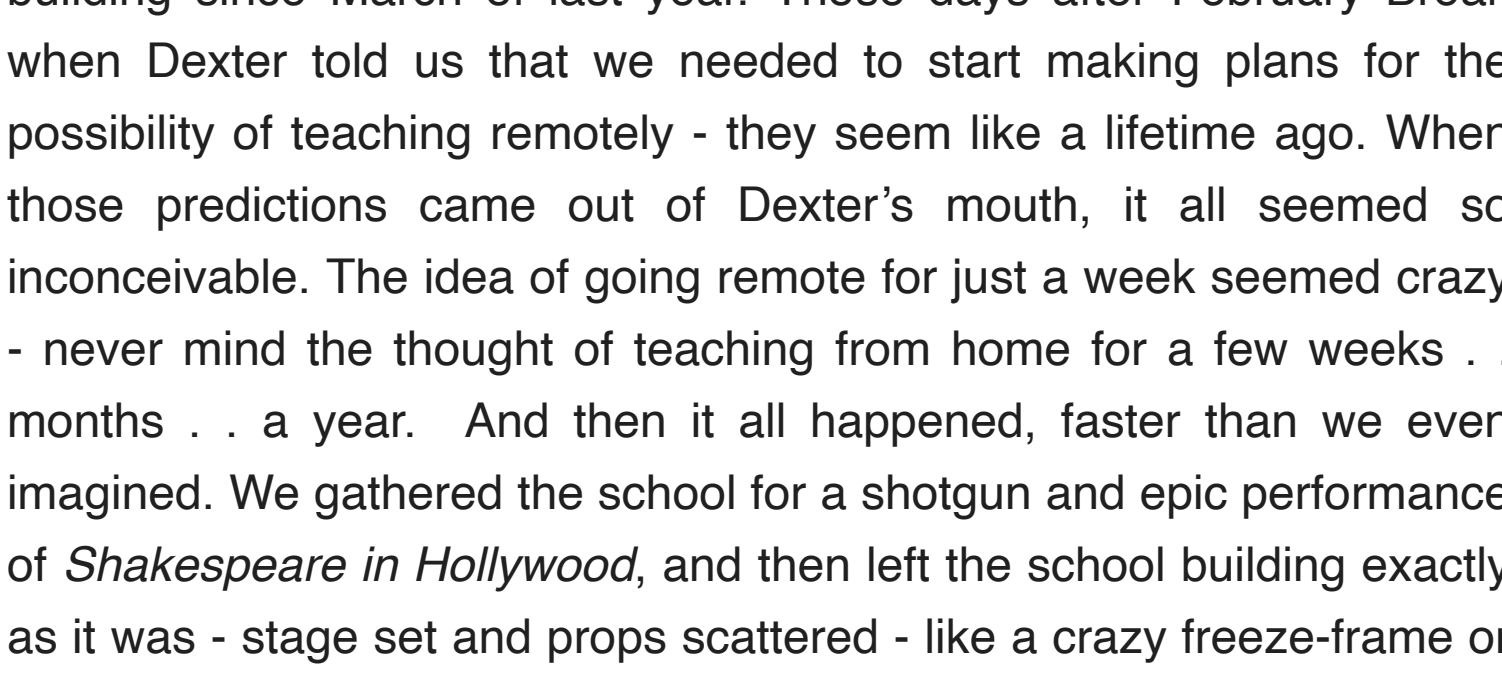
Items can be brought to the school on HyFlex days. We will also arrange for an outdoor drop-off (likely near the student entrance) for those who wish to donate items but are not planning to attend in-person classes. Thank you!



Summer Immersion Program Application Period is Open

The screens between us can't stop you from making new friends and pursuing your passions. Come connect with Vermont's brightest high schoolers for a summer of learning, friendships, and fun at the Governor's Institutes of Vermont! At GIV's online Immersions, you'll join a community of curious and engaged peers for 1-2 weeks, diving deep into a topic of your choosing. Take part in interactive workshops and research, study alongside expert mentors, and cut loose with virtual social events and game nights: join GIV's summer 2021 cohort! You won't have to worry about money or tech issues either - tuition is "pay-what-you-can," and GIV's tech support team is ready to help out with any internet or device issues.

Visit <https://giv.org/institutes/summer-2021/> for more info and to apply today.

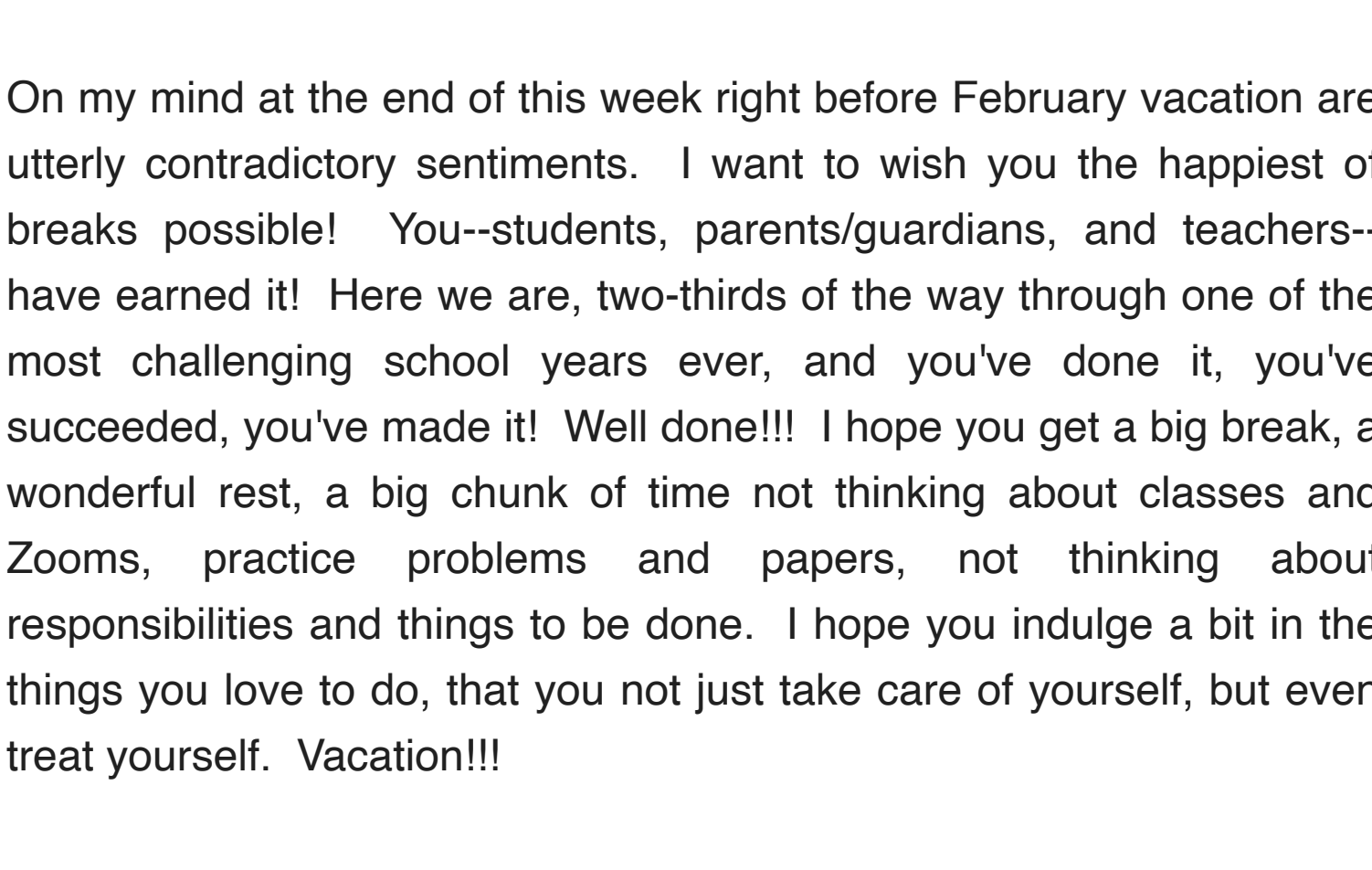


From Mark Cline Lucey, Faculty Liason to the Board of Trustees

This week - the first days that students and teachers were back in the building since March of last year. Those days after February Break when Dexter told us that we needed to start making plans for the possibility of teaching remotely - they seem like a lifetime ago. When those predictions came out of Dexter's mouth, it all seemed so inconceivable. The idea of going remote for just a week seemed crazy - never mind the thought of teaching from home for a few weeks . . . months . . . a year. And then it all happened, faster than we even imagined. We gathered the school for a shotgun and epic performance of *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, and then left the school building exactly as it was - stage set and props scattered - like a crazy freeze-frame or time capsule.

And here we are, almost a year later. We held a graduation ceremony like a drive-in movie theatre for the Class of 2020, while the Class of 2021 has lost the experience of being the Big Dogs in the building, and Andrew Stern has become our first-ever fully-online student body president. We have a class of 6th graders for a student number of 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th graders and even a faculty colleague who have never experienced a normal VCS school day or an actual Encounter Week. It's pure craziness.

And this week we began a new chapter. The desks in rows, spaced six feet apart . . . the strict regulations . . . the small number of people in the building . . . the masks - none of it feels like the Vermont Commons School that we know and love and miss. But we still appreciate this first step back toward a future when we will all be sitting and standing in a giant circle in the Commons Room, sharing announcements, competing in Green-Grey competitions, and cheering for community members who are sharing a poem, a song, or a magic trick.



From the Head of School

On my mind at the end of this week right before February vacation are utterly contradictory sentiments. I want to wish you the happiest of breaks possible! You--students, parents/guardians, and teachers--have earned it! Here we are, two-thirds of the way through one of the most challenging school years ever, and you've done it, you've succeeded, you've made it! Well done!!! I hope you get a big break, a wonderful rest, a big chunk of time not thinking about classes and Zooms, practice problems and papers, not thinking about responsibilities and things to be done. I hope you indulge a bit in the things you love to do, that you not just take care of yourself, but even treat yourself. Vacation!!!

But here's my contradiction: while I'm encouraging you not to think about school, my mind can't get away from what's right around the corner, right after break. This week was, in many ways, a test. For returning to the building. For getting slowly but surely back to school. For the first real step back. Monday (thank you, Seniors), were working out kinks in the tech set-up. Yesterday was more working out of the kinks: figuring out who goes where during multi-course periods, and how it's going to work to be with each other during lunch and breaks (that interstitial time we've all been looking forward to almost more than anything else). Today, the magic finally showed up. A room full of students, at their tables working on a lab together, one group discussing procedures among themselves, another getting guidance from their teacher. Laughter, cheer, just the right amount of volume and commotion. Life back in the building. Together.

I can't urge you enough to take a well-deserved rest, but I also can't resist sharing the excitement coming your way the week after next, when we'll all start **cycling back** into the building. Have a great February Break, and **see you soon!!!**

USEFUL SCHOOL LINKS

[Give to Vermont Commons](#)

[Guide for Students & Families](#)

[2020-2021 Community Calendar](#)

[RenWeb - Parent Login](#)

