The 2019-20 school year definitely did not turn out as we expected, but—from a certain perspective—I would judge this to be a uniquely successful spring semester for our school. While we all would have preferred the past few months had unfolded differently, I can’t express how proud I am of the way the whole RVGS community came together (figuratively speaking, of course).

It is a true testament to the culture we have at RVGS that we were able to not only continue instruction, but do so while maintaining our institution’s high expectations for student learning. I often stay education at our school is about much more than math and science, with our students equally gaining in areas like work ethic, determination, accountability, self-reliance, time management and more. It is the strong foundation developed in those areas that allowed us to complete the year how we did. Congratulations to our students and teachers for stepping up to the challenge.

While we turn our eyes to classes for next year, I cannot yet give a precise roadmap of how we’ll proceed in the fall. We will provide clear communication when plans crystallize, but please keep in mind that the situation will continue to be subject to change. Importantly, know that plans at RVGS will not directly match plans at each of our participating districts because of our regional format.

I hope everyone enjoys a safe and restful summer break.
Departing Physics Staff

The Physics department at RVGS is losing two of our beloved staff members at the end of this school year. Both Ms. Aldridge and Dr. Holt have decided that the time has come for retirement.

Ms. Aldridge has been at RVGS for 3 years. She has taught 1st year Physics and Engineering Design. She plans on retiring to Florida to be close to her family.

Dr. Holt has been with RVGS for 13 years. Though he is best known for his Physics, AP Physics and Engineering design, Dr. Holt also has taught Precalculus and has helped prepare many students for the SAT and ACT tests. He plans to take some time to travel with his wife.

The RVGS staff, students and families will certainly miss both of these tremendous educators. We wish them the best in this new phase of their lives and hope they will find some time to come back and visit!

Virtual Senior Dinner

One of the highlights of Senior year is the annual Senior dinner. With so many of the typical senior activities being cancelled, RVGS knew that the Senior dinner must go on! Students and families were encouraged to dine at home as a family while live streaming the event. Mr. Levy was the “Master of Ceremonies” and put together the slideshow and photos. Luke Arner (HV) and Mary Grace Giles (PH) were selected as student speakers. Student awards were given out for exemplary service to RVGS. The Alfred Blease Award was given to three RVGS seniors who exhibit strong academic skills with service to the community and leadership among the students. Mary Grace Giles, Charlie Murphy and Jonas Vanke were selected as recipients. The much anticipated Senior Superlatives had a decidedly RVGS feel and included categories as “Most Likely to Go to Space” and “Most Likely to beat Mr. Smith in Arm Wrestling”. Donations were collected during the event for a senior gift to support the Roanoke Strong Challenge, established by Sweet Donkey Coffee with the goal of providing coffee and kettle corn to all front line workers. The night concluded with send offs from each of the faculty at RVGS. Though a atypical “dinner”, it was wonderful to honor the Class of 2020 and wish them the best in their future endeavors.
Due to Covid-19, the Western Virginia Regional Science Fair, Virginia State Science Fair, and the Virginia Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (VJSHS) ran through a virtual format this year. Students and teachers did an amazing job in adapting to a new digital format. Much thanks to the judges for their evaluation under very difficult circumstances.

**Western Virginia Regional Science Fair Awards**

**Alternate Grand Award Winners**

- Assessment of Neonicotinoids in Blue Ridge Honey
  - Shannon Filer - RVGS/James River High School
  - Sponsor: Steve Smith

- Bioremediation of heterocyclic dyes by Pseudomonads
  - Murphy Johnson - RVGS/Patrick Henry High School
  - Jack Shepherd - RVGS/Patrick Henry High School
  - Sponsor: Cindy Bohland

- A Novel Algorithm for Cooperative GPS Navigation
  - Siddhartha Lamechane - RVGS/Patrick Henry High School
  - Charles Murphy - RVGS/Patrick Henry High School
  - Sponsor: Doug Divers

**Grand Award Winners**

- A Novel Multi-omic Approach to Identifying Cancer Recurrence-Associated Gene Signatures
  - Kevin Sheng - RVGS/Cave Spring High School
  - Sponsor: Cindy Bohland

- The Impact of Visual Input on Glial Cell Development Within the Mouse Brain
  - Mary Grace Giles - RVGS/Patrick Henry High School
  - Sponsor: Melissa Fisher

- Developing a Bluetooth Enabled Pill Dispenser
  - Grady Brydges - RVGS/Cave Spring High School
  - Luke Arnon - RVGS/Hidden Valley High School
  - Sponsor: Brent Holt

**Virginia State Science & Engineering Fair**

- Maggie Parkhurst and Rebecca Qiu - RVGS/WBHS
  - Animal Sciences 1st place

- Kevin Sheng - RVGS/CSHS
  - Biomedical and Health Sciences 1st place and Virginia Bioscience Foundation-Mark Licata Award

- Madalyn Likens and Eleanor Little - RVGS/PHHS
  - Plant Sciences 2nd place

- Simran Gill - RVGS/SHS
  - Animal Sciences Honorable Mention

- Uyen Tran - RVGS/WFHS
  - Chemistry Honorable Mention

- Shannon Filer - RVGS/JRHS
  - Earth and Environmental Science Honorable Mention

**Virginia Junior Science and Humanities Symposium**

- Uyen Tran—Chemistry 2nd place
  - Advancing to National JSHS

- Abhinav Karri—Life Science Category Winner
The 63 graduating Seniors of the RVGS class of 2020 certainly had a year to remember. While this year ended virtually, the students still had much to celebrate. Members of the RVGS class of 2020 are attending 22 different colleges, from as close as Roanoke College (14 miles) to as far off as University of Cambridge (3,857 miles). The most popular destinations this year are Virginia Tech (12 students) and the University of Virginia (17 students). Other state schools such as William and Mary, James Madison and VCU were also highly selected. Students were offered over $4.8 million in scholarships.

We will miss these amazing students next year. Remember we always love when students come back to visit and share all their new adventures! And remember, it’s not goodbye just see you later!

Faculty Awards

HOLLY ACKER
In recognition of her assistance with Student Advisory as Co-President

GRADY BRYDGES
In recognition of modeling a growth mindset, being a genuine lifelong learner, and using his talents to give back to his community.

MARY GRACE GILES
In recognition for her leadership and dedication to the RVGS morning announcements.

HANNAH LARGEN
In recognition of her leadership and dedication to the RVGS morning announcements

JACKSON MOYER
In recognition of his leadership and dedication to the RVGS morning announcements

CHARLIE MURPHY
In recognition for being the head morning flag officer

BEN NEWMAN
In recognition for his leadership and dedication to the RVGS morning announcements and his assistance with Student Advisory as Co-President

ERIN WEINKE
In recognition of her assistance with Student Advisory as Secretary

2020 SENIOR CLASS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
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<th>Name</th>
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