

THIS MONTH:

NOV 1 INTERIM REPORT
NOV 8 PARENT TEACHER
CONFERENCE DAY (12-6PM)
NOV 15 ALL DAY ELECTIVE
NOV 21 GOVIE GALA
NOV 23-25 HOLIDAY

Counselor's Corner

First semester is flying by and the 2nd interims will be going out on November 1st. Our students are making a great deal of progress and are working hard to keep their grades up while also participating in a variety of activities outside the school day. The main early action/decision deadline for seniors is also November 1st. Many of the seniors have been staying up later than usual to meet that deadline. This is both an exciting time for seniors and their parents and also a very stressful time. I promise, you **will** get through it! We are also almost half-way through with our academic workshops. We've been getting good feedback from students and we hope that this opportunity has been helpful and is something we can offer again in the future. One thing that has been reinforced by the feedback we have received is that many of our students are under a great deal of stress and are feeling overwhelmed and majorly sleep-deprived. Please touch base with your student and remind him or her of the importance of maintaining a healthy balance. The number one priority should always be a student's well-being and health. If you have any questions or if I can help in any way, please let me know.

RVGS Newsletter

Issue 3
Oct 27, 2016

Exciting New Program on the Horizon

As reported in the August newsletter, Dr. Rick Shelly sadly passed away this summer. Dr. Shelly represents a significant part of our school's history, being the founding director and leading the RVGS for its first 18 years. It can be challenging to find the best way to honor such an influential person and keep his memory close at hand. There could be no more fitting tribute to the life of Dr. Shelly than creating a new opportunity for the students of RVGS to challenge themselves intellectually and apply the skills they gain from the school. With this vision in mind, we are proud to announce the creation of the Shelly STEM Challenge competition series.

The Shelly STEM Challenge will give students the opportunity to compete in teams to solve real-world problems developed in collaboration with local industry partners. The students will apply their prior knowledge, along with information provided by volunteers from the industry partner, to find solutions to problems based on those faced by professionals in the field. After an introduction to the challenge, the students will work together to engineer their solutions, which will be evaluated by industry professionals based on effective-



ness, efficiency, feasibility, and presentation of their work.

The inaugural Challenge will take place Saturday, December 3rd, with plans to hold several events each year. Students will register in teams of four with a strong recommendation to include a variety of grade levels and skill sets on the team. The Western Virginia Water Authority will serve as our industry partner for the first event. The students will use model systems to solve a problem involved in the delivery of water to consumers through the Authority's pipe system. The event will close with a memorial for Dr. Shelly, with alumni and friends of RVGS invited to attend, followed by an awards presentation for top performing teams.

Information for students interested in participating will be available at school the first week of November and registration forms will be due November 11. We hope students strongly consider being a part of this important inaugural event, as competitors, volunteers, or spectators. Parents are encouraged to attend the awards presentation.

Message from the Director

October has been a very exciting month at RVGS. Students and teachers are settled into the school year and every day brings new opportunities for learning and building connections. As I visit classes, I am continually impressed by the innovative ways our teachers bring their material to life. I've seen our Algebra 2 classes using brine shrimp hatching to model statistics concepts, Mr. Divers' students using computer programming to apply equations to real-world financial problems, Dr. Shaibani's students using the physics of pendulum movement to investigate derivatives, open-ended analysis of mechanics videos in Mr. Merrill's classes, Dr. Holt's annual pumpkin launch to explore drag and mechanics concepts, and too many more examples to list here.

The real-world opportunities for our students continue to enrich with activities such as the senior field trip to GE to learn more about engineering, the new Shelly STEM Challenge program, and a mentorship program we are working to develop with the VTC School of Medicine.

Outside of the classroom, our students have been contributing to others in ways such as peer tutoring and the Ultimate Frisbee Tournament, which benefits the United Way (discussed later in this issue). Additionally, we have students who are taking advantage of the Academic Workshop series to pursue areas of personal growth.

We are making a strong effort to keep parents involved as well, having hosted our first open RVGS Foundation meeting this month, in which parents were invited to participate in focus groups to contribute ideas for the school.

I am excited to continue developing new opportunities for our school. I appreciate your support and enthusiasm in the process!

Champions of our Ultimate Frisbee tournament: "The Denominators"



Fall Ultimate Frisbee Tournament

The Fall Ultimate Frisbee tournament was our most successful Frisbee event ever! A record-breaking eight teams competed for bragging rights and a pancake breakfast, and the tournament raised \$420 to benefit United Way of Roanoke Valley.

The tournament was played single-elimination style with 15-minute matches before school, starting at either 7:45 AM or 8:05 AM. It took five mornings to complete the tournament, and Mrs. Sebolt did a terrific job of keeping both the time and the score. A total of 84 students participated – that's over 30% of the student body – with the largest team consisting of 14 students and the smallest of six. Every grade was represented in the tournament, as were all seven of our school districts. Two teams were named for Dr. Shaibani, one for Ms. Bohland's biotech class, and "It's dat Boi Papa John's" made no sense at all. Go figure.

Falls were plentiful as the students slogged through the rain and the muck, but no injuries were reported and only one student had to call home for a replacement outfit. There were astounding blocks and spectacular catches, and the level of teamwork required to score meant that every player was instrumental to the team. Most matches were close, but the championship game was an absolute barn burner (!), with The Denominators edging out PM Re-invented 4-3 for the win in front of dozens of cheering classmates. What a great way to start the day and end the tournament!

Thank you to Mrs. Sebolt for organizing the event and to all of our student athletes who paid \$5 each to play! It was a great week of friendly competition for a good cause. Congratulations to all of our teams: **Dr. Shaibani's Pi Squad, Impulse, It's dat Boi Papa John's, Kill**

Bite, PM Re-invented, Shaibani's Angels, The Denominators, and The Disc Jockeys. See you at the spring tournament!

-Regina Carson



Jack Whitehead and Brant Flici battle for the Frisbee!

Staff Spotlight on Mrs. Kathy Sebolt

Kathy Sebolt, AKA The Guidance Counselor, AKA The Candy Lady, has been helping students navigate the Governor's School for over eight years. She greets them at the door as they arrive and wishes them well as they depart, and in the hours in between she serves as parent, coach, confidante, and counselor.

Mrs. Sebolt spends a lot of her time helping our overscheduled children develop stress management strategies, study skills, and overall academic well-being, and advising them on things like college planning, social anxiety, and work/life balance. She provides leadership opportunities, such as the Student Advisory Committee, and creative outlets, such as the art show and the Frisbee tournament, to



encourage STEM students to use both sides of their brains. And for the times when our students' teenage brains fail them completely and all hope seems lost, Mrs. Sebolt keeps her office fully stocked with candy and Kleenex. "My office is a safe place for that," she said. "I'm always here to listen, comfort, and help kids figure out what they can and can't control."

A native Salemite and one of the first in her family to attend college, Mrs. Sebolt completed Salem High School in just three years and graduated from Roanoke College at age 20 with a degree in criminal justice. She planned to go to law school, but after working in the County clerk's office for a year, she became disenchanted with the justice system and decided instead to earn a master's degree in school counseling from Virginia Tech. Except for the year she took off to open a coffee shop (!), she has worked as a school counselor ever since.

At RVGS, Mrs. Sebolt has a unique position – she serves as both the head guidance counselor and the only guidance counselor, meaning that in addition to the 270 advisees she counsels, she is also tasked with administrative duties and student recruitment. It's a challenging job, but it's one that Mrs. Sebolt cherishes. "I feel so fortunate to be here," she said. "Governor's School parents are tremendously supportive and the faculty is like family. I really enjoy my work, especially when I work with the students. I think that

overwhelmed kids have become a systemic societal issue, and if one person can help by just being kind or by helping students develop a plan, then I want to be that person."

At home, Mrs. Sebolt spends her free time reading, watching Tech games with her husband, and fostering their daughter, Sloan's, current obsession with dinosaurs. Sloan, all of two years old, has just taken up hip hop dance, causing an introvert like Mrs. Sebolt to employ herself some of those stress management techniques she teaches at school. The family has two dogs – a "schnoodle with epilepsy and a diabetic mutt" – and both are more than a decade old. I guess it's only natural that someone who spends her days caring for others would spend her nights doing the same thing, but leave it to Mrs. Sebolt to so comically prove the point.

As a half-day school we are lucky to have a full-time guidance counselor, and RVGS really hit the jackpot in landing Mrs. Sebolt. She knows what it's like to be a high-achieving student of whom much is expected and much is required, and she knows how to provide the support our students need at this level, so they will be able to support themselves at the next one.

Please, parents and students alike, feel free to drop by the guidance office any time for any reason. Mrs. Sebolt's candy bowl is always open.

-Regina Carson

Changes to the Silent Auction and Annual Appeal

School fundraising has evolved. Sales are out, philanthropy is in, and nowhere is this trend more evident than in our Silent Auction and Annual Appeal numbers over the past five years.

Just five years ago, the RVGS Foundation made the bulk of its budget through the sale of goods at the Silent Auction, and just a few families or businesses donated cash to the Annual Appeal. Each year the paradigm shift has become more pronounced, and last year the Silent Auction earned only a quarter of what the Annual Appeal earned. It seems that people have finally accumulated enough stuff and now simply want to make a conscious decision to invest their hard-earned dollars in something that will benefit others.

The Governor's School serves 270 "others," and will serve countless thousands of "others" in the future, who would be honored to benefit from your generosity.

Proceeds from this year's Silent Auction and Annual Appeal will be used to purchase a single, signature item for the school: a \$40,000 Atomic Force Microscope that would enable nanotechnology research to be performed in-house. Nanotechnology manipulates the structure of matter at the molecular level – the prefix "nano" means "one-billionth" – and the future of nanotechnology holds great potential and endless possibilities. It is a cutting-edge piece of equipment that with care could be in use for decades, and it is an exciting prospect to

give students access to this technology.

Recognizing that the Atomic Force Microscope is a major investment, it is likely to take two years of fundraising to collect enough money to purchase it. This year's fundraising goal is \$25,000.

Rather than abandon the auction altogether, this year's Silent Auction will be a gift card/gift certificate auction only that focuses on experiences rather than stuff. RVGS is asking that parents secure two gift cards of any amount suitable for this year's auction, or make a tax-deductible cash donation to the RVGS Foundation as part of the Annual Appeal. Solicitation letters will be emailed to parents and available for businesses in mid-November.

Please be assured that RVGS will continue to host an extravaganza during Student Project Forum! In addition to the Gift Card Silent Auction, we are planning a 50/50 raffle, an RVGS Student Art Show, a looped slideshow of hundreds of student pictures from the RVGS Facebook page, and paparazzi pictures on The Roanoke Times' Red Carpet. We will celebrate our students on January 28th, and we very much hope to be able to celebrate reaching our fundraising goal, as well. Please give generously!

If you have any questions about the 2017 Silent Auction and Annual Appeal before the solicitation letters are emailed in November, please contact Regina Carson at thecarson5@cox.net.

Where have you been?

At the University of Virginia, where I received a dual-major Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Affairs and Spanish.



While at UVA I was bitten by the travel bug, and this year alone I've visited Croatia, Paris, Amsterdam, Iceland, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, the list goes on.

What were you doing there?

At UVA I was an **Echols Scholar**, which means I was blessed with having virtually no required courses to take. This was an amazing opportunity that allowed me the flexibility to take a variety of courses and constantly be learning about new and unfamiliar topics. It reminded me of the approach that the Governor's School takes with interdisciplinary electives and letting students make their own choices in their educational journey.

After **studying abroad in Valencia, Spain** during my third year, I wanted to work on blending my Spanish and Foreign Affairs concentrations. This led me to become a **policy analyst at the Mexican Secretariat of Pub-**

lic Security during the summer of 2012, where I worked with government officials on analyzing the effectiveness of their 2008 Nuevo Modelo Policial (New Police Model). I spent most of my time drafting an analysis of their intelligence value chain to identify where corruption was causing it to break down.

Where are you now?

As much as I loved working in Mexico, I wanted something more stable that allowed me the flexibility to work on different projects, think analytically, and tackle problems our government faces every day. This led me to pursue **Federal Consulting in Washington, DC** with **Deloitte Consulting LLP**.

What are you doing there?

Consulting is difficult to explain – even my parents aren't sure what I do! In a nutshell, **I work on a variety of projects for a variety of clients as a "business doctor."** If your agency or business is losing money, has an operational inefficiency, or simply wants to know what they can do better, they'll hire us to help identify and solve problems.

In the past I have focused on Supply Chain and Customer Experience Strategy, which are emerging areas in a variety of sectors (Think UBER!), and I have recently started to pursue graphic recording, which involves capturing brainstorming sessions with drawings and words. Deloitte also serves a variety of pro bono projects helping local businesses scale their supply chains and gain a better understanding of how to plan for supply and demand.

Alumni Spotlight on Sonora Braun

Where are you going?

Next year, I'm hoping to be sponsored by **Deloitte to get a dual grad degree: my MBA and a Masters in Manufacturing Management**. The experience I've had in outlining Supply Chain and Customer Experience has led me to explore opportunities for the government to utilize cutting-edge techniques, such as additive manufacturing (3D-printing), as well as how they can digitize their supply chains in order to improve the customer experience.

How has what you learned at Gov. School helping you get there?

Through a variety of Science and Technology courses (Shout-out to the Project Design & Engineering elective!), **Gov. School helped give me a solid foundation in problem-solving and human-centered design**. Although my job involves numerous "soft" communication skills, PowerPoint presentation-building, and handcrafting emails, the underlying mechanics of it are grounded in **scientific and research methods**. Gov. School gave me this experience, and also helped me connect dots I never knew existed between disciplines.

The **exploratory and interdisciplinary learning** that is encouraged by Gov. School faculty cannot be underestimated. I'm looking forward to taking this way of thinking to graduate school and beyond as I continue my career in Consulting!
-Regina Carson