



# RVGS Newsletter

Issue 2 October/November 2019

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

DEC 17/18	EXAMS
DEC 18	GOVIE GALA
DEC 20	END OF SEMESTER
DEC 21-JAN 5	HOLIDAY
JAN 6-31	INTERSESSION
JAN 20	HOLIDAY
FEB 1	PROJECT FORUM

## Counselor's Corner

First semester is flying by and the 3rd interims will be going out right after Thanksgiving on December 4th. 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 has passed and students are finishing up their regular decision applications. This is both an exciting time for seniors and their parents and also a very stressful time. I promise, you will get through it!

Exams are around the corner (December 17th and 18th) but there are many fun activities ahead as well. One such fun activity is our annual dance, the Govie Gala. The dance will be held this year on December 18th from 7:00pm – 10:00pm. Although this is a new date than in the past, it will still be a canned food fundraiser. Students must donate 5 canned food items as their “ticket” in. The theme will be decided soon so stay tuned!

*-Kathy Sebolt*

## An “Electrifying” Day at the Shelly STEM Challenge

On October 19th, RVGS hosted the annual Shelly STEM Challenge and it was electrifying! Our Lab Rats welcomed students from four other Virginia Governor’s Schools to form blended teams with students representing each school. Blue Ridge Virtual, Central VA and Shenandoah Valley all came ready to compete! Appalachian Power served as the program sponsor and provided mentors and judges for the event. Students were given a real-life situation to bring the power back to Roanoke.



Students were tasked to determine equipment needed for a short-term repair and where to install it. Technicians from Appalachian Power circulated throughout the day to help answer students’ questions and offer insight into possible challenges. By the end of the day, every group was able to come up with a solution to the problem that would have allowed power to be restored. The judges had a very difficult time picking a winner, so two groups were awarded top honors and Amazon gift cards. Overall it was a “energizing” day of competition and fellowship between some of the Virginia Governor’s schools.



## Message from the Director

We are approaching the end of a very successful first semester of the school year. Exams are just around the corner, so I strongly encourage our students to invest proper time in study and practice. Keep Dr. McGuire’s strategies in mind so you get maximum impact from the time you spend!

When we return to school in January, we will be in our Inter-session period. For first year folks, Inter-session is the special schedule we run during January for students to work exclusively on their research projects. It is a special time for our students to spread their wings and take on challenging problem-solving.

Sometimes students (and parents) can have difficulty with the relatively freeform nature of this process, and it is common for students to feel like they are spinning their wheels early on as they work through troubleshooting and redesign plans. My first piece of advice is to stay calm—panicking does not help! The other advice I would give is for students to take direct ownership over the project—the teacher is there to guide and advise, but ultimately it is YOUR project.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to contact me.

## Always Learning: Ms. Bohland



Ms. Cindy Bohland is proud to hold the record of longest tenure for any teacher currently at RVGS with 17 years and counting.

**What are the biggest changes that you have seen at RVGS?** *“Absolutely the technology and tools that are available to us and the students. We used to have to start the year teaching basic technology skills and now the kids come in with their own laptops. We have also been able to upgrade our own technology. RVGS has recently purchased a digital microscope and iPads for the students to use in class.”*

**What seems to have stayed the same?** *“Honestly, the students haven’t changed much. Our students still come in with a real enthusiasm to learn. Now we can just offer them more technology driven lessons and opportunities for research. In recent years, we have added AP Environmental Science classes and a collaboration with VTCRI”*

**What do you see in the future for RVGS?** *“RVGS will always have strong foundations in the math and science classes. Hopefully, more options to conduct research at outside and university laboratories will be offered. The students will be able to be exposed to relatively new areas of study such as nanotechnology.”*

Thanks so much to Ms. Bohland for all the time and dedication she gives to the Lab Rats. Here’s hoping that Ms. Bohland calls RVGS home for at least another 17 years!

## No Freak Out November

Back in October we informed everyone that we would be focusing on our students’ overall well-being and mental health by offering additional supports for the month of November. As the month draws to a close, we wanted to update you on how the activities have gone.

Stress charts and magnets were placed in each classroom so students (and teachers) could assess their level of stress at the beginning of class. The goal was to give students the time to reflect on how they were feeling and to also get a sense of what their peers might be feeling as well. Ultimately this awareness will hopefully lead to greater reflection and overall stress reduction.

We also launched You Uplift and are pleased with the number of submissions we’ve received each week. Students, parents and teachers have all been submitting positive messages and shout-outs and students seem to enjoy watching the messages scroll across the screen each day.

Each Monday we’ve invited students and faculty to participate in a mindfulness exercise before and after school. We’ve been pleasantly surprised by the turn out and we’ve even had requests to continue Mindfulness Mondays beyond November. In fact, each of these activities seem to be a positive addition to RVGS and we hope to continue them as we move forward through the school year. One student suggested we call December “De-Stress December!”

### My In-Control Scale

1	 I lost it! I need a break!
2	 I'm beginning to lose it!
3	 I'm feeling a little unsure.
4	 I'm feeling pretty good!
5	 I'm feeling just fine!

## Ultimate Frisbee

Another exciting season of Ultimate Frisbee has come to an end. After a week of intense competition, the championship was held between “RVGS Disc-terminated” and “3-peat”. “3-peat” came dressed for success in a variety of hats, tutus and kimonos. Their fashion forward performance helped them to hold on to their undefeated record. The victors were treated to a pancake breakfast courtesy of Ms. Sebolt. Entry fees from the tournament were used for a donation to the United Way.



## Student Spotlight: London Paige

After an intense couple months of research and science fairs, most students would be ready for a well-deserved break, but not London Paige. London dove right back into research and decided to start another project and compete in William Fleming’s local ACT-SO competition. After enlisting RVGS teacher Mr. Wages as a mentor, she came up with a project that combined her commitment to the environment with her love for Chemistry. Her project “*The Effect of Yeast on the Decomposition of a Starch-Based and an Algae-Based Bioplastic*” won a Gold medal at the local contest and earned her spot to compete at the National competition in Detroit over the summer. As part of her prize, the NAACP covered all of her ex-



penses for the trip. London travelled to present her research in July and ended up taking home the Bronze Award in Chemistry/Biochemistry!

London is not done yet. She plans on continuing her research and transition into making biofuels using the waste products of plants. Though only a junior, London is already looking ahead to the future. She is considering applying to Yale, Virginia Tech, University of Tennessee and Wake Forest where she hopes to eventually major in Environmental Science or Physics with a strong concentration in research.

Congratulations London. Way to represent the Lab Rats!

# Lab Rats Give Back

The RVGS Lab Rats found time in their very busy schedules to give back to the community with several fun and successful fundraisers. The fall Ultimate Frisbee Challenge once again gave students the opportunity to raise funds for the United Way while having a little fun intramural competition. Students also had a “Wacky Hat” contest to raise money for “Heavenly Hats”, a nonprofit organization that purchases new hats for cancer patients. Finally, RVGS participated in a book drive for “Today’s Readers, Tomorrow’s Leaders” that collected over 600 gently used books for area organizations. The RVGS faculty were fabulous sports by allowing the students to “pie” them in a trivia contest that supported the book drive.

