

## THIS MONTH:

4/12-13: Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair

4/16: 1st day of new spring elective classes

4/22-26: Modified Mock AP schedule

4/27: Shelly Challenge

5/1: Interim 6

# RVGS Newsletter

Spring 2024 Issue



## Counselor's Corner

Greetings and Happy Spring! We've been busy here at RVGS. I have met individually now with all first-year students and 11th graders and am working on end-of-the-year activities for seniors. It is hard to believe, but the 5th interim just went out! That means that the end of the year is quickly heading our way and there are many exciting (and sometimes stressful) things ahead. Although Project Forum has passed, the stress level for many is still high. Some seniors are still waiting for the last of the college admissions decisions to come in as well as for all their financial aid packages. Teachers are starting to prepare students for the upcoming AP exams, and spring sports are in full swing. Those things can certainly be stressful, but we will be adding some fun things in as well including our spring Ultimate Frisbee tournament scheduled for the week of April 29th. Players will be asked to donate \$5 or 5 canned food items for Feeding America.

As for our seniors...they have divided themselves into groups to work on numerous senior activities including creating a senior tee-shirt, a senior yearbook and a senior video. We are going to hold our 3rd annual Senior Sunset on Friday, April 26th at 7:00 pm. Senior Dinner takes place on Monday, May 6th at the Hotel Roanoke. Invitations will go out the week of April 8th. Senior breakfast will take place here at RVGS on Wednesday, May 12th and this will be the last senior day!

Last year we began a new tradition called Junior Jump, where we bring together the morning and afternoon juniors for a fun bonding activity. We are excited to hold this year's Junior Jump on Friday, May 24th. We will be busing the students (and several teachers) to Apple Ridge Farms for a low ropes course, lunch and loads of fun!

With all the things going on, it's important to remember to make sure students are taking care of themselves. They should be getting plenty of rest, reviewing study skills, and enjoying the fun things in between the stressful ones.

-Kathy Sebott

## Hoffman Forum

The Hoffman Forum Fellows were celebrated on March 18th at Hunting Hills Country Club. Eleven students participating in 5 different projects were celebrated for their ingenuity and creativity as the part RVGS Hoffman Fellows program. The Hoffman Forum Fellowship Program is a selective program for self-motivated 10th and 11th graders interested in pursuing any topic in-depth. Students are given the chance to explore an idea or to focus on developing a specialized talent outside of their science project and elective class. All projects are encouraged to include a community service component. Students were encouraged to pick a topic that they felt passionate about and were limited only by their imagination. Projects included: the Lab Rat podcast, backpack donations, work with the Special Olympics, a support group for siblings of Down Syndrome children and even an asteroid tracking program.



The Hoffman Forum program was made possible by a generous donation by RVGS alumni Sachith Gullapalli (RVGS 2013). RVGS students have a wide range of diverse interests outside of the typical classroom and no one knows this better than our alumni. Sachith wanted to encourage those interests with the development of a new program at RVGS that would support and fund students to pursue work they are passionate about outside of common structures like science fairs. After working with Mr. Levy to create the program, it was decided to dedicate it to one of Sachith's own RVGS mentors, Mr. Fred Hoffman.

## Message from the Director

With the start of April, we are entering the final phase of the school year at RVGS. Among other things, that means we have moved through the majority of the 'science fair season', with the last two major fairs just around the corner. RVGS is being represented by 19 projects/30 students at the Virginia State Science & Engineering Fair at ODU on 4/13, and we have 3 projects/6 students competing at the International Science & Engineering Fair next month. We are proud of those students for their accomplishments and wish them well at these competitions.

Spring also means we will soon have the first meetings of students' research electives at RVGS. To provide context for newer families, electives at RVGS run on a mid-April to early-March rotation rather than tracking with the start and end of the school year. This allows for a progression that better matches the rhythm of learning about the new material, developing project ideas, executing experimentation, and presenting that work at Project Forum. These spring elective meetings allow students and teachers to establish these classes prior to summer vacation so students can begin to make progress with the new material and start brainstorming project ideas.

The final portion of the year brings a variety of interesting events and activities for students, including a new edition of the Shelly STEM challenge, the spring Ultimate Frisbee Tournament, Senior activities, and much more. In the classroom, and with activities like those I mentioned, we look forward to a fun and productive end of the school year!

# *Govie Gala-Winter Wonderland*

On December 14th, RVGS students created a “Winter Wonderland” at this year’s Govie Gala. The lecture hall was transformed by snowflakes and twinkling lights by the Student Advisory Committee while students came out in their best winter and holiday styles.



The Govie Gala is also a fundraiser for Feeding America. Students donate 5 canned goods or \$5 to attend the Gala.

Students danced the night away to music from DJ Roy Prusak (RVGS class of 2000). He played a fabulous mix of old and new favorites that got all the students (and even a few teachers) onto the dance floor. A great night was enjoyed by everyone and RVGS was able to make a large and much appreciated donation to Feeding America. Way to go Lab Rats!

Students danced the night away to music



# Project Forum

The biggest event of the year at Roanoke Valley Governor's School is always Project Forum. On February 3<sup>th</sup>, projects from 265 students and 8 school districts were presented to be judged and then open to the public for viewing. Freshmen developed their research skills by conducting research concentrating on animal and plant sciences or microbiology. The more experienced researchers conducted research at RVGS or at area labs including VTC FBRI and Virginia Tech. Winning projects will compete at several area science fairs including Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Central Virginia Regional and the Western Virginia Regional science fairs. Project Forum also marked the end of the "official" Annual Appeal fundraiser. This year, we raised over \$38,000 to support instruction and supplies at RVGS. In addition to supporting the purchase of supplies and equipment for student research projects, the Annual Appeal pays for Project Forum awards, supports student activities and contributes to ISEF travel expenses. A special thank you to all the families, friends, and community supporters of RVGS who made this possible. Project Forum's overwhelming success was due to the incredibly hard work of the many judges, volunteers and of course RVGS faculty. Thanks to all who donated their time and expertise.



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## Western Virginia Regional Science Fair

*The 71st Annual Western Virginia Regional Science Fair took place on March 16th at Hollins University. The fair was open to students from RVGS, Roanoke City and Roanoke County. Along with awards for each category, students were able to win special awards from companies and organizations such as: Yale Science and Engineering Association, Regeneron Biomedical Science and NASA Earth System Science. Generous donations were provided by **RVGS Foundation**, **VT College of Science**, **Yokohama** and **Leidos**. The **AEP Foundation** was the Presenting Sponsor. Thanks to the support of AEP and other sponsors, three projects and a total of six students won Grand Awards and all-expense paid trips to compete at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Los Angeles. All first-place category winners can advance to the Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair on April 13th at Old Dominion University. Be sure to share your congratulations and good luck to all of our award winning Lab Rats!*



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# Highlights from RVGS

