

# The Governor's School Of Southside Virginia Spring/Summer 2013 Newsletter

## Alberta Presents Findings at Annual Research Symposium

The annual Student Research Symposium was a great success. The senior class presented on Friday, April 19th, followed by the junior class research proposals on Friday, April 26th. It was with joy and a sense of pride that we watched these talented young people share their findings and answer questions posed by the audience.

Several home school representatives as well as parents and SVCC faculty attended. Most of the parents said they were very impressed. "It gets better every year", commented Dr. Worrell, Superintendent of Greensville County Public Schools.

The research topics spanned different subject areas including chemistry, psychology, physics, human behavior, and sports. Every year the senior class presents their findings on topics they chose and began to research during their junior year. This component of the GSSV curriculum is very important because students learn about the entire process of conducting a research; from choosing a topic, conducting experiments, writing a paper, and finally giving an oral presentation. Also, the process gives them a chance to learn public speaking which is a vital component in every discipline.

*GSSV Alberta  
Senior Class of 2013*

## KEYSVILLE JUNIORS SHARE THEIR PASSIONS

This spring, the English 112 students presented individual Passion Projects as described by Richard M. Cash in his text *Advancing Differentiation: Thinking and Learning for the 21st Century* (2011). The process began in early January and culminated in April. Forty-five students utilized Cash's guidelines to develop presentations and research papers that captured their specific passions. The topics were quite diverse, including the effects and consequences of the media's portrayal of sharks, the importance of sign language, the art of designing and implementing a lesson plan, the mythology of and modern-day connections with the Greek Goddess Athena, an alternate perspective of the Norse God Loki, the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States, the evolution of Step dancing, and the love of all things Disney.

Robert Watkins, an English 112 student from Randolph-Henry High School who explored the past, present, and future of the city of Detroit, noted, "This was the easiest assignment I've worked on all year, not because I didn't put forth effort, but because I could tailor the project to my exact interests!" Mary Stewart, a student at Cumberland High School, shared her passion for Norse mythology,



*Rubin Harvey  
(RHHS)*



*Chelsea Deane  
(CCHS)*

specifically for the god Loki of AVENGERS fame. Mary noted that she often favored the underdog and that "even the wicked have a backstory." Kailyn Gilliam of Cumberland County High School provided a startling look into our country's human trafficking problem. She said, "I really enjoyed researching for my project. I learned so much about the dangerous things that happen to normal people right under our eyes. The true stories and statistics are so eye-opening!"

Finally, Dr. Hurt noted, "Our students produce many fine products, presentations, and projects, but that these Passion Projects

because students had complete control over the topics, the process, and the final products. They were able to choose whatever was meaningful to them and to share it with their peers. The enthusiasm and passion were heartwarming. I believe this project truly captured what gifted teaching and learning is supposed to be."



# CONTEMPORARY VICTORIANISM



Widdy Kelligan's Sheban from Bram Stoker's novel *Snake's Pass* opened on April 22<sup>nd</sup> for a spot of tea. Alberta seniors, disguised as Victorian characters, enjoyed British cuisine baked by Widdy Kelligan AKA Mrs. Wilson, as well as her students. Lady Humphrey also appeared as Lewis Carroll's White Queen. Senior Victorians, both whimsical and tragic, shared their "novel" or "poetic" lives as well as news and philosophies of the Victorian world. Some of the delicacies enjoyed included lemon shortbread tarts, English trifle, blueberry and currant scones, chocolate sponge cake, lace cookies, pound cake, and Irish gingerbread.

Among the guests, Jim Hawkins (*Treasure Island*) was overheard flirting with Alice in Wonderland as well as anyone else who was under 50 while Nancy (*Oliver Twist*) bemoaned her ghastly murder, and the Time Traveler (*Time Traveller*) did not know in what century he had landed. Meanwhile, Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*) amused everyone with her macabre search for "meat" to fill her pies while Sherlock Holmes tried to solve mysteries, and Van Helsing (*Dracula*) hunted for vampires. Catherine Earnshaw (*Wuthering Heights*) refused to marry lower class Heathcliff, but Dick Shelton (*The Black Arrow*) finally wed spunky Lady Joanna; meanwhile, Aurora Leigh soundly renounced all men as unequal to an education and a career in writing. Tinkerbell travelled from NeverNeverLand (*Peter Pan*), Mr. McGregor left his garden unattended (*Peter Rabbit*), and Dr. Moreau sailed from his strange island (*The Island of Dr. Moreau*) so he could defend his cruel treatment of lab animals. There was definitely drama, but what could one expect when visiting an inn with nearly thirty guests!

## VCU School of Engineering Hosts Alberta STEM Students

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Engineering hosted the Alberta campus GSSV juniors on April 10, 2013. Rachel Wasiliewski, senior recruiter, facilitated the visit by welcoming the students and introducing faculty that would be conducting activities and tours. Although the main focus of the day was bioengineering, the students learned that engineering has many branches. They also found that engineering applies to other fields of study.

The Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Afroditi Filippas, Ph.D., presented an overview of VCU's engineering program. Dr. Stephen Fong, the Associate Chair of the Department of Chemical and Life Science Engineering, discussed with the students the importance of engineering. He explained the evolving nature of engineering given the availability of new technologies.

Graduate students conducted tours of VCU's state of the art facilities. These included a research laboratory, fabrication workshop and a unique clean room (a highly controlled environment for testing, accessible to undergraduate students). The graduate students assisted the juniors in performing hands-on activities and investigations, such as writing DNA codes. The staff was very open to the students' questions and eagerly explained more about the engineering program.



Prior to this event, students had read a Victorian work of their choice and taken individualized tests so that they could bring a character to life for everyone to appreciate. The seniors had also researched a Victorian topic and written riveting essays on various subjects such as Victorian vivisection and mental illnesses present in *Alice in Wonderland*. Seniors spoke with British accents and Irish brogues, remaining "in the scene" for the morning, with the event culminating in a match of croquet in the rain. The Alberta Brits are never daunted so they swung their mallets with vigor to wrap up the enactment. Cheerio!



The students thoroughly enjoyed the generosity of the school, including free shades, bags and pens with the VCU logo. For lunch the students were allowed to eat in the VCU dining hall, which provided a fantastic lunch in a collegiate setting.

The GSSV Alberta campus juniors really appreciated the opportunity to visit VCU and gained a wealth of knowledge from the experience. They would like to thank Dr. Williams and Mrs. Moore for setting up the trip.

Go Rams!

## *The Governor's School of Southside Virginia*

**Providing gifted, highly motivate juniors and seniors a challenging, interdisciplinary program of studies that develops leaders who possess the skills, global perspective, and vision needed to address the challenges of a rapidly changing society.**

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