

IMPORTANT DATES:

OCT 11 - NON-STUDENT DAY
OCT 27 - INTERIM 2
NOV 1 - PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
NOV 2 - NO SCHOOL

RVGS Newsletter



Sept 2021

Counselor Corner

RVGS is alive with the energy and excitement of students and faculty! We are just a few weeks in and everyone seems to have settled into their courses and are ready to learn and grow together. I am currently meeting individually with seniors by request to discuss the college application process in general and to answer questions specific to them. Soon I will be meeting individually with new students to check in and see how their transition to RVGS is going and how I might be able to help. RVGS Determined has been a big part of RVGS for the past few years and Mr. Levy and I will be conducting group sessions monthly to work with students on those topics that are important to self-growth, not only as a student, but as a human being. Our first topics will cover the importance of goal setting and positive habits as well as an overall check-in on how students are feeling and handling their stress. As always if you have a question or a concern, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. I am here to help students and parents in any way I can. Happy Fall!
-Kathy Sebolt

WELCOME BACK

The first day of school is always a highly anticipated event at RVGS but this year there was a bit of extra excitement in the air. Finally, RVGS could offer full in-person instruction to all students. While several safety precautions remained in place such as face covering and observing 3ft distancing, the students were finally able to return to 5 days/week and more normalized instruction.



As part of the return to normalcy, field trips are being planned to Fishburn Park and the James River. Students have already started attending their elective classes and planning their projects for Intersession.

We are looking forward to a healthy and successful year for the RVGS Lab Rats!

Message from the Director

It has been a true joy to have our full student body attending five days a week again! While in a number of ways we know life still isn't fully normal, I think the students and teachers have done an excellent job transitioning back to a traditional schedule and academic routine. I want to take a moment to thank all members of our community for your proactive efforts to follow our COVID protocols and keep our school healthy and open.

Many of our students are experiencing new difficulties managing their limited time with the return of extracurricular activities. We encourage any students having difficulties with this issue or others like study skills, academics, or stress, to reach out to Mrs. Sebolt or me for support.

With that said, I want to express how proud I have been with the efforts and positive attitudes from our students at the start of this challenging school year. I am very proud of how our students have been taking on the challenges ahead of them!

Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

ACT-SO AWARDS

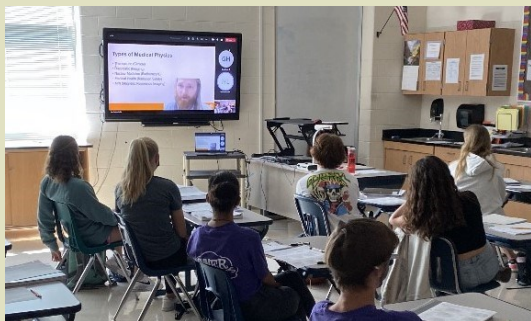
Congratulations to recent William Fleming/Governor's School graduate Uyen Tran, who won a gold medal for Biology/Microbiology at the NAACP National ACT-SO Competition. Uyen represented RVGS/WFHS and the Roanoke branch of the NAACP at the National ACT-SO competition this summer. ACT-SO (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics) is a yearlong program designed to recruit and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students. Students from across the country competed virtually from July-7th-10th.



Way to Go Uyen!

Real-life Applications in RVGS Precalculus

Students in Pre-calculus were recently able to virtually connect with a scientist from UT Knoxville to learn more about the role of biomedical physicists in the treatment of cancer. Harrison Line is a graduate student in biomedical physics at UT Knoxville. Harrison has a special connection to RVGS as his mother, Mrs. Roark, is one of our pre-calculus teachers! He met with the students to share information about medical physics careers and academic requirements. A medical physicist is a professional who applies the principles of both physics and medicine. They focus on the areas of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, as well as prevention of risks to the patients, and members of the public in general. A medical physicist plays a fundamental role particularly in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Pre-calc students are currently studying radiation and later in the semester will complete a lab where they measure and analyze the radioactive decay of a substance.



Summer STEM Activities

RVGS students had a busy summer! They spent their time away from RVGS attending summer camps and classes, interning, and volunteering.

Su Gursoy- attended the Virginia Tech High School STEM Camp (BLAST). Also attended the EDU Futuro STEM program.

Remi Davies- BLAST Summer Camp at Old Dominion University (virtual)

Emma Seidel-participated in the Washington Youth Summit on the Environment by George Mason University

Eleanor Little -Summer Governor's School for Agriculture at Virginia Tech

Mariam Abdelmalak- attended BLAST at University of Virginia

Troy Harmon- Data Science Bootcamp concentrating on python programming, making models, and creating research proposals.

Alicia Carvalho- VASTS Summer Academy and Internship at Novozymes Biologicals in the BioAg Lab

Katie Cross-worked as paid intern in Latham Hall at Virginia Tech under Dr. Westwood's Plant Parasite Lab.

Lacey Ngo-worked at Dialysensors at Virginia Tech as a research assistant.

Abhi Karri-volunteered as EMT and in a hospital

Savannah Peters- attended a virtual summer camp at WVSOM. Concentrating on different medical fields and illnesses/diseases.

Maddie Brown- Virtual NASA Internship with UT Austin and NASA Virginia Earth Space Systems Scholar Summer Academy

Raghav Vasudeva-volunteered at a hospital

Griffin Kauffman-VASTS summer academy planning a mission to Mars

Cynthia Lin-attended MYSIS (marine program) and Summer Residential Governor's School for Math, Science and Technology

Paige Netting- attended CDC Summer Academy

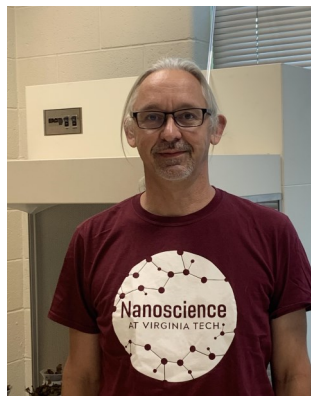
Brett Smith-enrolled in Engineering class

Seth Caldwell-attended BLAST Summer Camp

Vineel Kavuru- volunteered at a hospital



Meet Our Faculty-Steve Villers



Steve Villers may be one of our newer full-time teachers but he is a familiar face to many of our students.

We recently had the chance to catch up with Mr. Villers and find out what brought him to RVGS

Can you tell us a little about your teaching background?

Joanne and I got started teaching in the Mississippi Teacher Corps in 1995. This is a program through the University of Mississippi that trains and places teachers in underserved areas through the state. I taught one year in Holmes County and one year in Carroll County, MS. From 1997 to 2007 I taught at North Stafford High School. Mostly Chemistry and Dual Enrollment Biology, and in 2003 (I think), Stafford County added AP Environmental Science (APES) to the curriculum. I've always been interested in environmental issues and education – I have a master's degree in conservation biology. Joanne (who was at another high school in the county) and I along with teachers from the other 2 high schools helped develop the curriculum. I taught APES, as well as chemistry and AP/DE Biology until we moved to Roanoke in 2007 so we could be closer to our business in Carroll County (VA), Blacksnake Meadery.

From 2007-2016 I taught at Patrick Henry – Biology(2007-2008), AP/DE Biology(2007-2016), Ecology (2008-2013), and APES (2013-2016). Then I left teaching to focus on our business. I taught some homebound students for a few years, and taught 2 sections of APES at PH in the 2018-19 school year. The following year I taught 2 sections of AP/DE Biology at Cave Spring starting in early October. I also helped out in Joanne's Environmental Research elective at RVGS during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

I joined the RVGS faculty full-time last school year.

What do you see as some of our biggest changes recently – environmentally? Educationally?

I think environmental issues overall get more attention in the media, and we're seeing some of the predictions about climate change materialize. Enough so that science can attribute extreme events to climate change rather than claim "not enough data". At the same time there is an increasing amount of misinformation (sometimes deliberate disinformation) that it is hard for folks to determine what is evidence-based, what is opinion, and what is fictional. So I'm hoping to put a little more effort into helping students evaluate current events more critically and center class discussions around the science. I think this is a more interesting approach, both for me and my students, than just simply focusing on concepts.

Biggest challenge for me is (continuing from last year) adjusting my teaching to the capabilities and interests of our students – which is also what I like about this job. Our students are much more capable of thoughtful, deep discussions. This makes for a much more rewarding experience for them and me. The challenge is continuing to push them (and myself) and keep it interesting and- hopefully- fun.

Have student attitudes changes about the environment?

Young people in general seem more interested in environmental issues, but I think maybe there's a little more concern now than when I first started teaching environmental science. Also, the broad range of topics makes this class a great opportunity for spreading scientific literacy - in class we frequently talk about current events and hopefully my students can relate what they've learned to family and friends.

Alumni Highlight- MURPHY JOHNSON

We always love to hear from our RVGS alumni and recently we were fortunate to get to catch up with the very busy Murphy Johnson (RVGS '20) to hear about life at the University of Virginia and his recent summer internship with the EPA.

After graduation, Murphy applied for a highly competitive summer internship with the EPA. He found out during his 1st year at UVA, he had been selected for the internship and would be assigned to the Region 5 of the EPA located in Chicago. Among his numerous responsibilities, Murphy was tasked with evaluating state regulations on drinking water specifically for the Native American tribal communities. He was also involved with planning the next 5 year health-based violation plan. But Murphy is not just concentrating on the EPA. During his time at RVGS, Murphy worked in several research labs in Roanoke. This gave him a great start to jump right into the labs at UVA. He joined a lab in the Climatology Department where he has committed to working as a full-time intern until 2023. He is currently studying COVIDs effects on heat related deaths in Virginia.

Murphy enjoyed his time with the EPA so much that he is hoping to return to the EPA with another summer internship and also in a full time capacity after graduation.

Great job Murphy and good luck with year 2 at UVA!



SOCIAL MEDIA

Want to stay up to date on all the exciting happenings at RVGS? Be sure to following us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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