

# MVRHS Parent Newsletter

Martha's Vineyard Regional High School

October 2014

## Principal's Coffees



The information we got from the Principal's Coffee Survey has been very helpful. Many thanks to those of you who were able to complete it.

It remains as difficult as ever to find a time for coffee that works for everyone. **In an effort to be as inclusive as possible we will alternate morning (8-9am) and early evening (5-6pm) times.**

Rather than set all of the agendas ahead of time as it was done in the past, the agenda will be set a week or so in advance of each coffee to allow for more flexibility.

Here are the fall coffee dates for your reference.

### October 7<sup>th</sup> 8-9:00am, Library Conference Room

*(with coffee, tea and baked goods)*

Agenda: Meet the new principal, hear about his approach to education and what's he discovering about MVRHS.

### November 4<sup>th</sup> 5-6:00pm, Library Conference Room

*(with water, cheese & crackers)*

Agenda: TBD

### December 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-9:00am, Library Conference Room

*(with coffee, tea and baked goods)*

Agenda: TBD

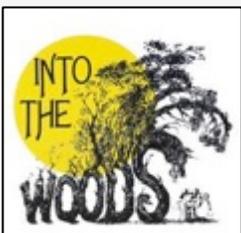
## Island Authors Visit Honors English Classes

Cynthia Cowan's 10th grade Honors English classes were recently visited by Island authors Jay Schofield, Tom Dresser, and Herb Foster, whose newly published book, *Martha's Vineyard in WWII*, is already in its 3<sup>rd</sup> printing. Students had just finished reading *A Separate Peace* (a story about two friends at a New England prep school during WWII) and were interested in learning more about island life during this time. The authors complied, relating stories of adventure, stealth, sacrifice, and commitment -- from reports of Roosevelt secretly anchoring off Menemsha, to tales of German spies landing on our beaches. The class probed for more details and asked about the challenging process of writing this impressive work chronicling our involvement in WWII. In the end, students realized that while sometimes our island may seem rather isolated from it all, it does not always enjoy "A Separate Peace."

*Cynthia Cowan, English Teacher*



## Into the Woods Auditions Set for October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>



Auditions for this year's musical, *Into the Woods*, will be held after school on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Details will be announced the week of October 6<sup>th</sup> and audition materials will be available in the theatre room or from Mrs. Wightman. An audition workshop to assist students in preparing to try out will be held after school in the theatre room on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Community members, parents, and graduates are welcome to join our production: acting, singing, or helping with costumes, sets, makeup, etc. Contact Brooke Ditchfield ([bditchfield@mvyops.org](mailto:bditchfield@mvyops.org)) or Jan Wightman ([jwightman@mvyops.org](mailto:jwightman@mvyops.org)) for more information.



## Alternative Ed Program Has a New Home

The old childcare room and Family Center at MVRHS have been completely gutted and renovated to add 4 state of the art classrooms and office space to house the Alternative Education Program. This space is the end goal of almost 3 years of planning and temporary housing for us while the Family Center finished out its lease and the planning, permitting and building process took place. We are now approaching the finish line and it's looking pretty amazing.

*Joel Graves, Alt. Ed. Teacher*



## New to MVRHS: Print Club

Print Club is a new club coming out of the art department this year. Students will be learning how to print their own designs onto t-shirts and posters. Our goal is to create shirts that can be sold to raise funds for more supplies and make shirts for other clubs and groups in the school. Any student is welcome to join, even those with little artistic ability. This is a fun club whose focus is on the process of screen printing and creating a positive school and Island community.

*Tiffiney Shoquist, Drawing and Painting Teacher*

## Opportunities for Seniors to Meet College Representatives



Representatives from the following colleges, universities and programs will be visiting MVRHS this fall. Please check Naviance for times and future visits.

Mount Ida College	10/6
Merrimack College	10/7
UMass Lowell	10/8
Boston University	10/9
College of Charleston	10/14
Wentworth Institute of Technology	10/14
University of Rhode Island	10/14
United States Marine Corps Recruiter	10/16
Mass. College of Liberal Arts	10/17
Johnson State College	10/17
Curry College	10/20
Simmons College	10/20
Wheaton College	10/21
Roger Williams University	10/21
Franklin Pierce University	10/23
University of New England	10/23
Framingham State University	10/24
Keene State College	10/27
Bryant University	10/29
Endicott College	10/29
Johnson & Wales University	11/3
Sacred Heart University	11/6
Fisher College	11/6
Westfield State University	11/7

## New Writing Lab Teacher Has Arrived



Dear Parents,

I wanted to write to introduce myself as this year's Writing Lab Teacher. My name is Elaine Hays and I come from College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA, where I served for eight years as the Director of the Writer's Workshop and college writing instructor. I earned my Ph.D. from the University of Rhode Island and also have degrees from University of Massachusetts Boston. I'm excited to be here on the island to work with all of the aspiring writers at MVRHS. Please do not hesitate to send me a message if you would like to set up a meeting.

*Elaine Hays, Writing Lab*

## History Department News

October is a busy month for the history department. Joellen Meuse and Olsen Houghton are taking all of their freshman history classes on the African American Heritage Trail. The students will be involved in creating projects in a variety of media for an exhibition of work inspired by the Trail. A group of community judges will award works of excellence with financial prizes in many categories. The African American Heritage Trail Board encourages work from students that will extend what is generally known about the Island's history. Prizes for works of excellence are given in the categories of research papers, physical projects, artistic representations and electronic presentations. This year, new principal, Gil Traverso will travel the Trail with the freshman classes and we are all excited about introducing the lives that are celebrated on the Trail to our new principal.

The Irish History Class is working on creating its garden again this year and has already traveled to the Edgartown School to teach Alicia Knight's third grade class all about Irish mythology. The meeting was a great success and the high school class is looking forward to hosting a visit from their third grade buddies to celebrate the season. The Brazilian History Class is also rebuilding its garden this year and is working on preparing Brazilian myths and legends to share with the Oak Bluffs School 6th grade.



This year, the Brazilian American Friendship, which for the last four years has been an annual, and increasingly popular, event, will happen in December. The Brazilian History & Culture Class will work collaboratively with the Portuguese Language Class to host this annual event that builds and celebrates community in our school. The One World Club sponsors this event.

*Elaine Cawley Weintraub, History Dept. Chair*



## Come Out to Support the Football Team

Don't miss the next two varsity football home games.

**Friday, October 10**

**Vineyard vs. Bourne @6pm**

**Friday, October 17**

**Vineyard vs. Somerset Berkley @6:30pm**

This year's Island Cup game will also be at home on November 29th.

*Donald Herman, Coach*



## October at Alex's Place

**Alex's Kitchen:** Teens learn basic food preparation skills, nutrition, kitchen safety and much more in a relaxed, fun setting. Occasional field trips will take place as well. (Parents will be responsible for field trip transportation.) Sign up in person at Alex's Place. The program sessions begin October 3rd. Space is limited.

**Teen Table Tennis Club:** Join members of the MV Table Tennis Club for an awesome chance to learn real professional table tennis. This ten week program for teens 13 and up will take place beginning Saturday, October 4th at 6pm. Refreshments will be served. Free of Charge.

Visit <http://www.alexspplace.net/> for information about other programs including Alex's Ysters, the Current Music Club and 7 Miles Out Digital Magazine.

### COMMUNITY OPEN STAGE

*A Fun Filled Evening for the Entire Community*

Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at 8pm

\$5 for adults, teens free of charge

*Sign up in advance in person or at*

<http://www.alexspplace.net/#!open-stage/c1net>

## Financial Aid Night for Parents of Seniors

*Tuesday, November 18*

*MVRHS PAC 6:30-8:30 p.m.*

The guidance department will be sponsoring a financial aid night presented by MEFA on Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the MVRHS Performing Arts Center.

## MVRHS Students Participate in International Coastal Cleanup



On Sept. 20th, many of our students joined with hundreds of thousands of volunteers at 5,583 locations around world for the 29th annual Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. It is the world's largest single day volunteer effort to clean up our beaches, lakes, and rivers. Held at the Vineyard Haven Harbor, the Beach Clean Up was organized by our own Katrina Lakis as part of the MVYLI (Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative).

Our students from the MVIronment Club, as well NHS, some Minnesingers, and others, came ready to collect and catalog trash. Every piece of trash was tracked and counted, and it will be included in the annual index of global marine debris.

Of the 4579 items collected, Maddy Moore tabulated the top three as:

- 3344 cigarette butts
- 221 small plastic pieces (smaller than 2.5 cm)
- 205 food wrappers



*Natalie Munn, Science Department Chair*

### Pre-Season Training Opportunity for Winter Sport Athletes



Do you want to B-Stronger, better conditioned, and more durable?

Craig Yuhas of B-Strong and Coach Gary Simmons of MVRHS are offering a Supervised Pre-Season Training Program for Winter Athletes. The program starts October 15, 2014 at B-Strong in Oak Bluffs.

For more information contact Craig Yuhas at 774-255-0465 or [b-strongmv@comcast.net](mailto:b-strongmv@comcast.net).

*Gary Simmons, PE Teacher, Varsity Baseball Coach*

### PSAT and SAT Testing Dates

#### PSAT Testing

**Wednesday, Oct. 15      Cafeteria 7:40 a.m.**

The PSAT administration will be on the morning of **Wednesday, Oct. 15 in the high school cafeteria.** Juniors sign up in Guidance. The test costs \$15.00 paid by cash or a check made payable to MVRHS.

#### SAT & SAT Subject Tests

TEST DATE:	REGISTER BY:
Oct. 11	Sept. 12
Nov. 8	Oct. 9
Dec. 6	Nov. 6
Jan. 24	Dec. 29

### English Department Seeks Parent Volunteer

The English Department is in need of a volunteer to help complete their book inventory. The hours can be completely flexible. If you're interested in helping out please contact Dan Sharkovitz at [dsharkovitz@mvyps.org](mailto:dsharkovitz@mvyps.org)

## Two New Laws Mean New Requirements for School & Families

### ATTENDANCE

There is a new, more strict attendance law that requires schools to meet with parents/guardians if a child misses five or more days of school unexcused per year. This is significantly different than in years past. The purpose of the meeting with parents/guardians is to devise a plan that will change the attendance behavior. In the event that unexcused absences continue, the school will have to revisit the plan with parents/guardians and may have to involve the truancy officer of the child's town. Of course, there are excused absences for a variety of understandable reasons as described in the Student Handbook (pages 21-22), and parents may use two family excuses per quarter for any reason they choose. As a reminder, written or emailed messages excusing an absence for any of the reasons in the Student Handbook are due within three (3) days of the return to school. Medical excuses for prolonged illness (5 days or more) are due within five (5) days of returning to school.

*Andrew Berry, Assistant Principal*

### DISCIPLINE

The other change in law involves disciplinary responses from the school. While statutory violations result in suspension and possible exclusion from the school, non-statutory violations generally, but not always, require a behavioral support plan to be implemented before suspension is used as a response. Any behavior that is a safety issue may involve the child being removed from the school, depending upon the situation. However, the spirit of the law is to encourage attempts to change the behavior before a student is removed. In the event that a student is removed from the school for a period of more than ten days, an educational plan will be formulated to give the student an opportunity to stay current on his/her studies. A chart in the Student Handbook (pages 36-37) outlines this new information.



## Robot Prototype Takes A Dive

On Wednesday, Oct 1<sup>st</sup> the high school robotics class took their remotely operated underwater robot prototype for a test drive in the pool at the YMCA. The test drive was a success and the robotic device worked well.



Phase two of the program will have the students adding cameras and monitoring devices and then we will begin exploring the waters around our island. Special thanks to Mr. Connors for working with us on the project.

*Marylee Carlomagno, Math Teacher*

Peter Ruimerman and Bradley Fielder, seniors in Ms. Carlomagno's robotics class, built the prototype. The kit is part of a grant the school received from the Office of Naval Research as part of the Sea Perch Program. With a successful prototype, the robotics students will all build and customize their underwater robots and a navigation competition will be held in the near future.



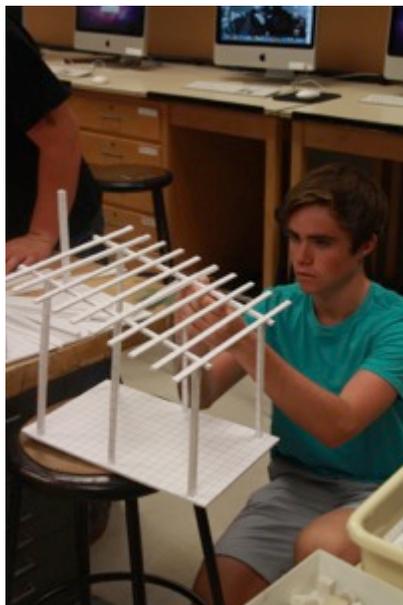
## The MVRHS Pergola Project



*Site Survey Measuring*



*Concept Sketching  
(Tabor Caron)*



In a unique opportunity this semester, Architecture & Design I students, along with Building Trades and Horticulture students are working together to enhance the presence and function of the high school main walkway. Architecture I students have started the design process for a new pergola by surveying the site, creating visual reference boards of pergola structure, seating and details, sketching concepts and working on a preliminary scale model of their designs. After the preliminary designs are reviewed with Building Trades and Horticulture, the students will begin their final drawings and models. Everyone is very excited about having the opportunity to create a design that will actually be built and have such a direct impact on the school environment!

*Elsbeth Todd, Architecture & Design teacher*



### *Working on Scale Models*

*(clockwise from top left: Daniel Lipinsky, the group doing their preliminary sketches, Schmeichel Oliviera, Henry Danielson, Eleah Caseau, Tabor Caron)*

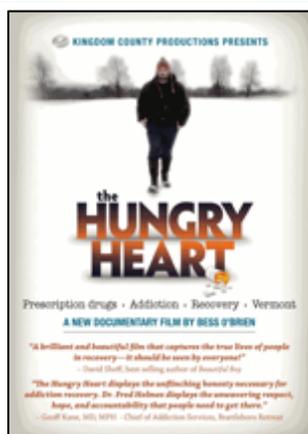


## Photography Students Participate in International Collaboration

Photo/Graphics I students have been involved in a collaborative documentary photography project this month with classes in Yemen, Vietnam, and Argentina. They've been preparing captioned photographs on two topics so far: "pollution and the human impact upon the environment", and "mealtime and food". Students post and respond to their peers' work in an online forum and by email. National Geographic recently profiled teacher Chris Baer as "Geo-Educator of Week". Read more at: <http://blog.education.nationalgeographic.com/2014/09/16/featured-activity-global-documentary-photo-exchange/>.



Yemeni students Sara, Hajer, and Marwa have partnered with MVRHS students on a photography project. They live in the coastal city of Mukalla.



The documentary film *The Hungry Heart*, about prescription drug addiction and youth, will be showing at the MV Film Society on Martha's Vineyard on **Oct 10th at 7:30pm**. A panel discussion will follow the screening with the director Bess O'Brien and local health care providers. For more information visit

[www.thehungryheartmovie.org](http://www.thehungryheartmovie.org).

**THE HUNGRY HEART**  
Martha's Vineyard Film Society,  
Vineyard Haven

Sponsored by the Martha Vineyard Times  
Tickets \$12 (\$9.00 MV Film Society members)

## The MVRHS PTO: A Few FAQs

Among the many thoughtful comments parents shared in the Principal's Coffee Survey, there were several questions that kept coming up about the PTO at MVRHS. Perhaps the FAQs here will help answer some of those questions...

### Is there a PTO/PTSO at MVRHS?

Not right now. There may have been an organized PTO at one point but in the time I've been a parent here (6 years) there hasn't been an organized group.

This doesn't mean there can't be one! In fact this might be a wonderful time to revive it. Anyone interested in leading such an effort is welcome to access the parent email network or newsletter as a way to reach out to others.

### Why do I get email from MVRHS\_PTSO?

MVRHS\_PTSO is a mailbox that was set up within Edline and the school's email network in the past. Although there is no active PTO, the name of the mailbox has remained the same.

If you are getting email from MVRHS\_PTSO it's because you signed up to be on that list. I do my best to keep it updated. Emails from this address include: reminders about Principal's Coffees, information about opportunities to become involved at MVRHS and other parent specific information. If you're on this list you'll also receive the newsletter directly, instead of having to find it online.

### Who writes the newsletter?

Articles for the newsletter are contributed and written by teachers, administrators, coaches, organization directors and others who are connected to education at the high school. About six times a year I reach out for submissions (all are welcome), put it together in newsletter format and distribute it.

### If there's no PTO/PTSO, who's in charge of teacher appreciation events, communication with the administration etc.?

Because there's no formal PTO there is no board or person "in charge". Colleen McAndrews used to coordinate the Principal's Coffees but passed the job on to me when she was elected to the School Committee. I've been doing it by default since then.

Colleen has also been the driving force behind the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon. For the last few years she and I have reached out for help with that event and many, many parents have pitched in to make it a huge success. There are also a few parents who volunteer within the building based on needs that were communicated from the staff and shared with parents through the newsletter and the parent email list (MVRHS\_PTSO).

Again, anyone interested in becoming more involved in doing some of these things is more than welcome!

*Jennifer Estabrook, MVRHS Parent Volunteer*

## Boomerang Trivia at Alex's Place

**Boomerang Trivia:** Join in the fun to see what happens when a baby boomer (adult) is paired with a millennial (teen) to form a team to compete against other teams to answer questions from both eras. Prize awarded to top team.



*"You may not know the answer  
but your teammate can save the day!"*

Topics are culled from music, film, art, sports, news, and more. Boomer Ray Whitaker and Millennial Tessa Whitaker will emcee the event.

**Friday October 10th 7 pm**

**Free of charge.**

**Sign up at Alex's Place or Call 508 - 696 - 7171**

## Drama Club

The drama club will be starting up soon. In addition to some 'veteran' theatre folk, we have several new members. There is always room for any student who is interested in any aspect of theatre: lighting, sound, acting, directing, costumes, make-up, set design, etc. Contact Brooke Ditchfield for more information.

*Jan Wightman, Performing Arts Dept. Chair*

## Fashion, Fiber Arts & Sewing

New to the list of electives this semester is the Fashion, Fiber Arts, & Sewing class. Students have just completed their first project, a hand-sewn clutch! In the coming weeks students will be learning a lot of new things including how to use a sewing machine, how to knit, and reading a sewing pattern. Any extra fabric or sewing supplies you have lying around the house would be greatly appreciated by the students! Contact Mrs. Shoquist ([tshoquist@mvypps.org](mailto:tshoquist@mvypps.org)) for any donations you would like to send over.



*Tiffany Shoquist, Drawing & Painting Teacher*

## Photo/Graphics II Class Collaborates with MV Museum

Photo/Graphics II students have been photographing storefronts and pedestrians in downtown Oak Bluffs in cooperation with the Martha's Vineyard Museum. They are preparing a "Then-and-Now" exhibit for the museum that will include contemporary photographs as well as restored and enhanced antique prints, which will be prepared and curated entirely by the students.

*Chris Baer, Photography & Graphics Dept. Chair*



*Photo/Graphics II students are trained to properly handle antique photographs by the Museum staff.*

## Assessment Days & More in Performing Arts



The Performing Arts Department is preparing for Assessment Days, October 22-23. All students in both music and theatre classes will have the opportunity to perform and to be a part of the audience for the other groups during these two days. Parents and community members are invited. The schedule and exact times will be posted on Edline soon.

There is still space in most of the classes and students are welcome to join chorus, sound technology, guitar, musical theatre production, and theatre! Contact Jan Wightman or have your student come see one of the teachers to make arrangements. Students may also take an independent study, developing their own curriculum based on individual interests and working with one of the teachers as a mentor.

*Jan Wightman, Performing Arts Dept. Chair*

## MVRHS Innovation Club Travels to New York for Maker Faire



*Cal Howard, Chris Aring, Brahmin Thurber-Carbone working on the electric kart.*

Members of the MVRHS Innovation Club traveled to the Maker Faire in New York City in September. The group was invited by the Maker Faire organizers to give a presentation about their project, *The Two Week Electric Kart on the Make: Education Stage*. They spoke as a panel for 30 minutes about the experience of creating an electric kart in two weeks on a shoestring budget in time for this spring's Cape Cod Maker Faire.



*Willow Wunsch designed a logo for the group, and used it to create original t-shirts for everybody.*



*Kate Sudarsky speaks with people about her work with the Watercolor Bot.*

During their time at Maker Faire, students worked on many personal projects. While they did these projects, they demonstrated their problem-solving techniques and answered questions from the public. Cal Howard programmed a maze-solving robot, Kate Sudarsky worked with the designers of the Egg-Bot and Watercolor Bot tools to tune the machines and create original projects. Willow Wunsch designed a logo for the group, which she cut on the vinyl cutter and used to make custom t-shirts for the group to wear. Kevin Montambault designed and built a LEGO walking robot. Chris Aring, Brahmin Thurber-Carbone and Cal Howard worked on the electrical and mechanical systems of the car that they had built and then drove it on the Power Wheels Racing track. On Sunday, Caleb Kraft, MAKE magazine's community editor, interviewed several members of the group.



*Cal Howard met Logan and Qain from Tek Syndicate.*



*Kate Sudarsky got advice on tuning the Watercolor Bot from Lenore Edman of Evil Mad Scientist Laboratories, manufacturer of the kit.*

The Innovation Club joined with Cape Cod Makers to staff a booth showing projects and teaching people how to do hands-on projects. The booth received an Editors' Choice award from Maker Faire organizers. The trip was organized and chaperoned by Art teacher Chris Connors and Math teacher MaryLee Carlomagno.



*Chris Aring, Cal Howard, and Brahmin Thurber-Carbone did some sight seeing on the World's Fair grounds.*

*Chris Connors, Computer Tech Teacher*



*Casey McAndrews, Advanced Photo/Graphics*