



The High School View

The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by The Martha's Vineyard Times, with the generous assistance of the sponsors whose names appear below.

Plants from space land during science fair

BY G. GALEN MAYHEW

Sixty-four students competed for three grand prizes presented in honor of former Tisbury Waterways president Mr. James H. Porter in the annual science fair this past Saturday. Among the many projects were studies on the effects of gravity on plant growth, biofuel made from algae, a multipurpose cabinet/dresser designed and built for college, and a smartphone app to teach the proper response to a seizure.

Judges evaluated projects in two categories: engineering and investigation. Said judge Molly Peach, "We look at how the students are following the scientific method. Not only that, but critical thinking is a

really big part of it. You can tell how much each student is thinking about their project, and reflection is important."

Fellow judge Savannah Lawson said, "They don't necessarily have to have definite conclusions right now, they just need to have ideas about what should have happened with their project or why it didn't."

While some students entered the fair hoping for



Freshmen Patrick Best and Pearl Vercruysee won first place at the science fair on Saturday, February 8.

PHOTO BY KRISTINE HOPKINS

awards, others entered for different reasons. "I participated in the science fair because it

looks good for college, it's fun, and you can learn something by participating," said junior

Peter Ruimerman.

While judges milled through a forest of display boards, visitors were drawn to the sight and sounds of whirling blades. Windmills are a separate category of the high school's science fair, entered by students of Dana Munn's Honors Physics classes. The windmill testings began just after 9 am, using a wind tunnel built by Mr. Munn to determine electrical output. Fourteen turbines were entered in the science fair with 21 students represented.

"For me, the science fair gives students the opportunity to do a hands-on project," said Mr. Munn. "The windmill project was inspired by the real turbine we have here at the high school and fits in well with the physics curriculum."

The high school's wind turbine was built using money

donated by Caroline "Nana" Rheault in 2006. Said Mr. Munn, "The goal of her donation was to inspire careers in renewable energy. We are trying to further that goal with the windmill project in the science fair."

Following the conclusion of the judging period, the grand prize winners were announced. Freshmen Patrick Best and Pearl Vercruysee took first place with their study on the electrical output of cyanobacteria. Second place went to junior Samantha Potter and her study of the pH levels of Crystal Lake in Oak Bluffs, and third to junior Alistair Rizza and her "Pocket Lifesaver" app.

"I'm looking forward to doing more work and getting ready for the regionals," said Patrick. "We're going to try to improve our project further and do our best." **MSV**

High school accredited for 10 more years

BY SARAH ORTLIP-SOMMERS

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has awarded the regional high school continued accreditation after its visit last year. The accreditation process takes place decennially and aims to establish and maintain high standards for education, according to NEASC's website. This accomplishment is a testament to the high quality of educators at MVRHS and the hard work of every student.

The NEASC Committee on Public Secondary Schools (CPSS) evaluates each educational institution based on several educational standards.

The first step in the process was a self-study by educators at the high school. The study lasted from June 2010 until March 2013. The school was praised for its collaboration among members of the School Advisory Council, student council, School Committee, and professional staff during the self-study.

"The purpose of the self-

study is to go through the whole process and make the school aware of any deficiencies," said physics teacher Dana Munn, whose job during the study included evaluating the school's support services for students.

"I think the self-study was more important than the actual visit," said senior Mikayla Tinus, who was involved in the self-study evaluation. "We were forced to examine every part of our school, which I think is the most important part of the process."

Preparations for the NEASC visit included establishing a set of "Core Values and Beliefs" that was implemented and encouraged among students and teachers. By the time the committee arrived on the Island, students and faculty members were well-versed in the school's goals to encourage them to "aspire, collaborate, and engage."

During their visit to the Island last spring, members of the visiting committee reviewed self-study materials, shadowed students and teachers during the day, observed

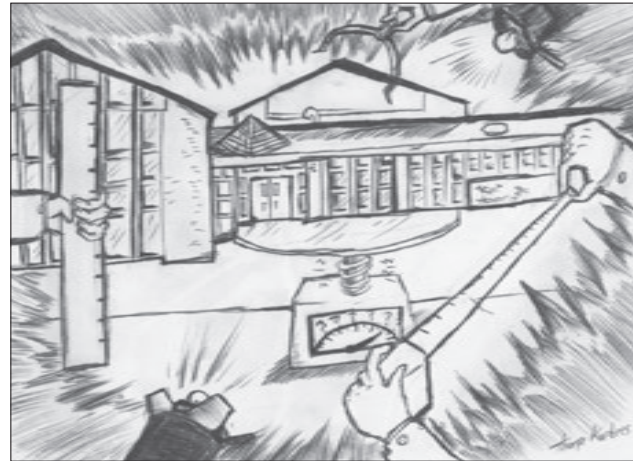
classes, toured the campus, and engaged in meetings with faculty members, students, parents, and administrators.

They also wrote and presented a full report on their findings. The report, which is available to students and parents through Edline, provides praise and criticism of certain aspects of the school's educational system. Additionally, the report outlines specific suggestions for ways to make the school the best it can be.

A sampling of the numerous commended items include the establishment of a clear set of beliefs about learning, challenging and measurable learning expectations; vocational programs; lessons providing students with 21st century skills; aligning curriculum with the Common Core; use of authentic tasks in electives and higher-level classes; work-study and mentoring programs; support for new teachers; identification of learning gaps; common preparation periods for new and alternative-education teachers; and a school culture that provides a

"safe, positive, respectful, and supportive" climate.

The CPSS also requested that school officials submit a Special Progress Report by September 1, 2014. This report should include detailed



ARTWORK BY THORPE KARABEES

information about action to address a few specific issues. They include development of strategies to ensure that all students are held to high expectations, removing of barriers to self-nomination for class enrollment to achieve equity, engagement in formal cross-disciplinary collaboration, and evaluation of the

HVAC system.

Highlighted recommendations from the letter include ensuring the school has developed school-wide rubrics and identified targeted levels of achievement, implementing a formal process for oversight of alignment of curriculum and for review of data from

reviewing the current advisory model to provide adult/students relationships that will assist and support students, and improving the shared vision, trust, and mutual respect among building and district level administration.

Teachers are not shocked by the concerns raised by the report. "The recommendations were mostly things that came out of the self-study," said Mr. Munn. "Any issues that were brought up in the report we were aware of before the visit. The report seemed consistent with our study."

The CPSS congratulated the administration and faculty for completion of the first two phases of the accreditation program. The next step is the follow-up process, during which the school will implement valid recommendations in the report. The school's accreditation status will be reviewed again upon submission of the Special Progress Report. **MSV**

The View will not publish until Thursday, March 6, due to Presidents' Day and February vacation. See you next month!

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