



Bringing Students' Unique Potential to Light Since 1963

WINTER 2008

A SEASON FOR GIVING

By Jim Gaul

As the Holiday Season comes and passes each year our thoughts often turn to family and friends, to the joy of the season, and the pleasure of sharing our good fortune with those who are dear to us. This year the Little Keswick

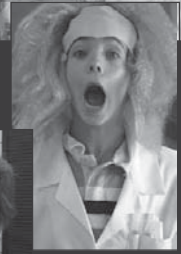


community asked "How can we help those who haven't been as lucky as us?" After careful consideration, the Student Council decided that a food drive benefiting the Jefferson Area Food Bank was a great way to do something to make the Holidays a little brighter. What made this food drive special was that Student Council asked the student body to donate their hard earned token dollars to the cause. During the two weeks of the drive many students went without soda, candy, or that cool new toy they had their eye on at the school store, dug into their pockets and

gave all they had. When the dust settled and all the donations were tallied, the students had raised over 40,000 token dollars! Wow! The Student Council was able to take that money to Sam's Club where they piled their cart high with enough food to bring smiles to more than a few families. The genuine happiness displayed by the student body upon seeing the sizable amount of food we were able to donate was a bright and shining reminder of what the holiday season is all about. Happy Holidays! 🌲

PEEK INSIDE THE PINES

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SOMETHING "WEIRD" ABOUT HALLOWEEN

By Tom Rigg

Every year around November 2nd a question is asked: "What should our theme be for next year's Halloween celebration?" Some may find it rather silly that we ponder this question right after finishing the most recent festivities, but the truth is that's the sort of excitement, planning, and creativity needed to bring about the biggest community event here at Little Keswick.

Around November 2nd of 2007, the decision was made for the 2008 Halloween celebration theme to be "Weird Science" and very few staff and no students knew until a month before the event happened. Once the theme was revealed it was full speed ahead! Students began planning costumes and the Yellow House dorm helped create a fantastic Halloween Carnival and staff volunteered to stay late or come in early to participate in the fun.

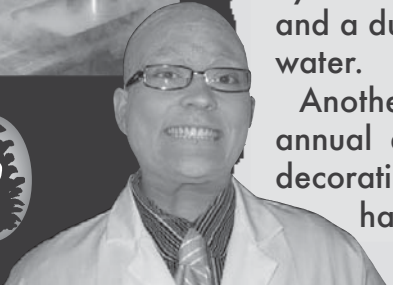
Aside from the usual trick or treating, our community celebrated with hayrides, special Halloween movies, and a Little Keswick classic, bobbing for doughnuts. This year we added a few new surprises as well. The students were able to participate in some crazy experiments with out resident mad scientist, Jim Gaul. They also had the chance to test their skills at a Halloween carnival complete with the "Hulk Smash" "High Striker", "Igor's Eyeball bounce", "Name that Matter", and a duck pond with slime to replace water.

Another exciting addition to this annual event was a classroom door decorating contest. Each classroom had the opportunity to decorate

their door for a chance to win the honors of most thematic, most original, and best overall. Aside from the honor of winning, this was a great team building activity and a chance for students to get creative and have some fun.

With all of this fun people might start wondering how we manage to take care of all the other important tasks here at the school. Part of what made this year's Halloween celebration run so smoothly was all the effort our whole community, parents, students, and staff put into this event. Thanks go to all of the parents for their generosity and dedication. From candy, pizza, and pumpkin donations, to helping their son pick out the perfect costume, every parent played an integral role making this Halloween the best on record. The Little Keswick staff also deserves recognition. This year more staff came early and/or stayed late than any other year before. Many of the staff dressed up in costumes, truly making this an event the whole community enjoyed. Halloween can be a stimulating event and this year, more than any year in the past, our student body had fun and enjoyed the day's events while continuously upholding our community and its focus on respect for self and others.

Just a few days after the Halloween event, several staff began talking about next year's theme. Even though students will beg and plead to know what it will be, it will have to remain a secret until next year. Until then, our community will have to enjoy the memories of this Halloween's excitement and fun. 🌲



PARENTS' WEEKEND

By Terry Columbus

How can one weekend take so much work and be so rewarding and fun? They say "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, it took every member of this village to pull off a really successful Parents' Weekend.

The Little Keswick Foundation for Special Education held its 11th annual Education Symposium on Thursday, October 16th. Dr. Rick Lavoie is a nationally renowned speaker and has over thirty years of working in residential care. He has published books, has award winning video tapes, has given key note addresses for three of the major special needs advocacy organizations in the United States, and has been on national television to support the message he brought to us, Helping Children Find Social Success.

Dr. Lavoie led a workshop on Friday for our parents, which was received with great enthusiasm, laughter, and an occasional tear. What followed was one of Pearl's, Cecil's, and Illusion's delicious lunches followed by conferences with teachers, counselors, and family therapy appointments. The evening culminated in a fabulous Silent Auction/Reception for the Foundation. Several of the most bid upon items were: a beautiful charm bracelet with an array of gems and charms representing LKS made by a



Dr. Rick Lavoie

parent of a former student, a bat and baseball with the LKS logo and 45th Anniversary inscribed along with all the students signatures and guest, Howie Long, commemorating our student staff softball game, and a beautiful color print of the school's entrance with a billowing flag. We

are so appreciative of the generous spirit and enthusiastic response to this event. It was a lovely venue and a way for parents, staff, Foundation Board members, and friends of the school to come to know each other.

Saturday, Dr. Marty Thomson led a parent support group that was identified by the parents as one of the most valuable sessions they attended. A parent remarked, "Dr. Thomson was brilliant taking a room full of people and leading them on a journey where all could observe or join in." Stories were shared, many for the first time in front of a group. As Dr. Lavoie mentioned at the beginning of his talk to our parents, "I know something that you do not know now. I know that you will meet people in this room who will be your friends for life."

A quesadilla lunch made by Juan was enjoyed by all before meeting at Davis Field for the community soccer game. The weather couldn't have been more beautiful and fall-like, which contributed to the enthusiasm and positive energy. 🌲



CONSULTANT TOUR

By Terry Columbus

Virginia in the fall is beautiful and what better time to show off Little Keswick School to a group of Educational Consultants from all over the country, Bermuda, and Canada? The planning for this tour of six therapeutic and special needs programs in Virginia has been in the works for about ten months. Many of the children that come to LKS find us through the referral of an Educational Consultant. It is important that we help these professionals learn more about the work we do. Several consultants have been

long term supporters for over twenty years and have placed numerous boys with us. Their visit only served to strengthen those ties and reinforce the quality of the program that LKS provides. The Consultants were given an overview of our program by Marc Columbus, Headmaster and Dr. Marty Thomson, Director of Psychological Services. Groups toured the new classrooms and dormitories, as well as the art room, woodshop, and riding facilities. Student ambassadors JC, Andrew, Josh, Travis, and Patrick did a great job of explaining LKS from their point of view. Consultants received a bookmark made from cherry or walnut with our 45th anniversary logo and "Pens for Freedom", which were pens turned on a lathe that students have made in shop to send to troops in Iraq. Homemade chocolate chip and

oatmeal raisin cookies made by Pearl were sent with a very happy group on their way to the next program. A few comments received:

"The student and staff ratio is amazing. The constant "rehearsal" of expectations and directives to the boys contributes to their success. Mostly, I felt the amount of nurturing that goes on here and specialized attention."

"I couldn't be more pleased and impressed with your program and your care of my student and his family."

"Always on the top of my list of programs/schools. Organization was apparent throughout. Can I say adorable children? Friendly, welcoming staff. So thrilled with the new dorms."

"Wonderful! Warm, nurturing and caring – the quality continues!!"

"Well organized tour. Program clearly articulated. Very professional staff."

"Excellent tour. The school shows very well and it is apparent that the boys are so well cared for and loved."

"As always, Little Keswick is an inspiration. Please express my thanks to your impressive staff and students for a worthwhile tour."

None of this would have been possible without the work of our committed staff. Thanks to everyone! 🌲



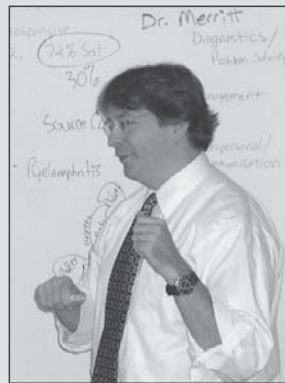
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

By Dr. Mark Kindler

How do you really know what you want to do as a career? As a young person, it is very difficult, if not impossible to know what the best choice is. School is a period where preparation for a career occurs, and at Little Keswick we try to prepare our students for the future.

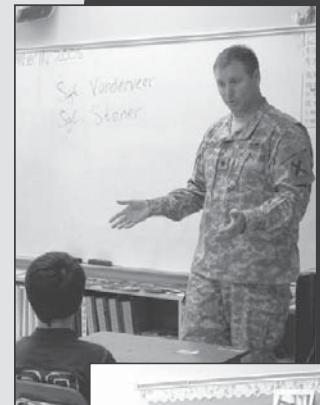
On Tuesday, November 11th Little Keswick had a Career Day sponsored by the Academic Team. Students were surveyed about careers and interests they had and the Academic Team tried to find people representing the interests of the boys to share their professions. We managed to have a great turnout of volunteers.

Sergeant Robert Vanderveer and a colleague from the National Guard came in uniform to talk about the opportunities in the Army. They told stories of setting up operations, how things worked, and the opportunity to get a college education paid for while students train for a life in the military. Steven Stokes, a local Blacksmith, brought in some decorative ironwork samples and explained many of the techniques involved with making the pieces. A small animal Veterinarian, Theresa Olivo, talked about her business working with household pets. She runs a business that makes house calls and takes care of Midnight the school's cat. Eric Pluda, a Computer Technician brought a



Dr. Clint Merritt

table full of computer parts and other electronics. Bonnie Stephaniac, a Conservation Technician, talked to the boys about how our actions and choices have very serious long range effects on the environment. To illustrate her points, she had a three-dimensional table display which allowed the students to see (and interact) with how development or misuse of resources creates a large impact on the environment. Dr. Clint Merritt, a local Physician had students diagnosing a patient using information that was written on the white board to figure out what was wrong and what treatment would be appropriate. Rich Palermo, a Forester talked about how to determine the volume of wood available from a tree. His job is to determine the amount of wood and its worth to a large paper company he works for. Finally, our neighbors and regular visitors at our school, the East Rivanna Fire Department, came with their biggest pumper truck. The boys were given a tour of the truck and were able to view all of the fire-fighting equipment used by the firemen. It was a great event for all. We are very fortunate, indeed, to have such wonderful people who are willing to share a day of their lives with us. 🌲





SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Dr. Kathryn Brabender

Q: Do you remember the first time you came to Little Keswick School?

A: I definitely remember my first visit to LKS. I was so impressed with the beautiful campus and smiling faces. I was surprised with many warm and friendly greetings from both students and staff members. I remember leaving at the end of my visit and thinking what a special place LKS must be and how I very much wanted to become part of it!

Q: What attracted you to Little Keswick?

A: There were many reasons I wanted to become a part of the LKS community. The mission of the school fit well with my ideas of helping others as a professional. The caring attitude and dedication of the staff members was very evident in their interactions with the boys. The friendly and supportive environment seemed to be important components of the culture at LKS. I think what made LKS most attractive to me was watching the boys participate in community meeting. I was so struck by the maturity, composure, and sincerity that they possessed. From an outsider's perspective, I found community meeting to be a very moving and powerful experience, one that I wanted to be able to be a part of on a regular basis!

Q: What are some of the significant changes that have happened since you have been here?

I have only been at LKS for 2 and 1/2 years, but there have been some significant changes that have already occurred. The new school/dorm building opened this fall which has been wonderful. Also, the social-emotional curriculum (SEC) has been implemented as a major component of the program. I think the SEC is an important addition to our already strong program. It provides the boys with specific, definitive understandings of the skills they are working to develop, and has improved communication amongst all individuals involved in the treatment for each boy.

Q: What keeps you coming back?

A: There are many reasons why I continue to work at LKS, but the one that is strongest is simply the boys and their families. There is so much joy to take from the experiences I have in working with the boys and their families. It is hard to find a place where the dedication and efforts of the parents is as equally important as those of their sons. The smiles and shared experiences I get from working with the boys would be hard to replace. I also think LKS provides a great work environment where the team approach to treatment is key. The amount of information and communication I obtain from all of the individuals who work with each boy makes treatment much more effective. The dedication and flexibility of the staff members make it a great place to work!

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: Over the past few years I have acquired a liking for running. I used to strongly dislike running of any real distance, but recently I just completed my first half marathon. Soccer will

always be one of my favorite sports so I really enjoy watching the boys here play soccer (and getting to play with them once in awhile is even better!). I also enjoy reading in my free time and visiting my family. 🌲

\$1000 GRANT AWARDED TO LITTLE KESWICK SCHOOL

By Dr. Mark Kindler

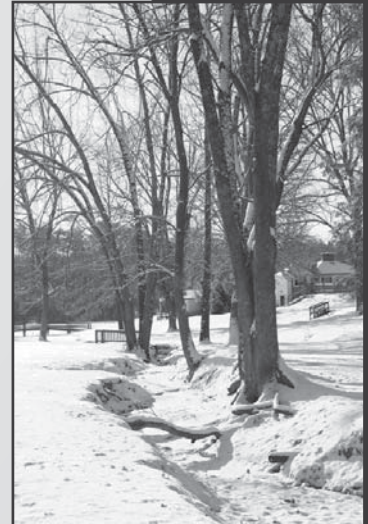
Anyone who has visited Little Keswick School remembers the small pond with its bridge and two fountains, and has heard tales of the great fish and large turtles it hides. How does such a small body of water support such a variety of life, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and water fowl? And an even bigger question, how does our peaceful pond influence a huge body of water, the Chesapeake Bay?

These questions and many more will be answered by the students in Group D this year as part of their science class. The class will engage in a hands-on water quality sampling from the in and out flow of the campus stream to understand their part of the larger Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Students will also take two field trips to the Appalachian Trail in the Shenandoah National Park to experience the height of land in the watershed, and to Williamsburg, Virginia to observe the watershed emptying into the Chesapeake Bay.

The Watershed Project is made possible by a grant written and acquired by John Gillette. John is

in the process of taking classes at the University of Virginia towards teacher certification. His interest in the outdoors and concern about the environment led him to apply for the grant. John is a seasoned outdoorsman who has hiked the entire Appalachian Trail – three times. (That’s over 2000 miles each time) We are fortunate to have John as a classroom aide for Group D at our school.

John chose to work with the LKS science class as one of his class requirements. He has a personal interest in the fact that we are part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and wanted to explore what water quality means to our community. The hands-on experience is a way to work on problems using scientific methods, observation, and the ability to assess the health of the environment on a small scale. The information and data found can then be generalized how it affects the larger community, namely the health of the Chesapeake Bay. 🌲



Please send your questions or comments to:

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A NEW ARRIVAL

By Tricia Neumann

Bella, a gray Lipizzaner mare, arrives at Little Keswick. Her conformation, manner, and style set her apart from the other horses. It was a special opportunity when she was donated and also a breed of horse I knew little about. She sees the world with her head held high, bright intelligence gleams in her eye. When she moves she floats, and she glistens bright white practically glowing in the dark. Ask the students and they will tell you. Bella's heritage dates back to the 16th century. The world-famous Spanish Riding School of Vienna, Austria uses highly trained Lipizzaner stallions in



public performances that demonstrate classical dressage of haute ecole or high school movements. The "airs above ground" movements originally intended to be used in military maneuvers are awe-inspiring. The Lipizzaner have a history that is unique, defined by their service to mankind. The breed developed and preserved with diligence today are rare, about 3000.

As you see her standing proud and at attention in the field you know that she will teach us with noble style and that we are fortunate to have her. If you have the chance, consider catching a Lipizzaner Show with your family! 🌲

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

🌲 February 20, 2009 - March 1 2009 Winter Vacation

Little Keswick School
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