



# Bus Stop Conversations

Neighboring news about the Washington Central Supervisory Union schools of Berlin, Calais, Doty Memorial (Worcester), East Montpelier, Rumney Memorial (Middlesex), & U-32.

**Inside This Issue:**  
**Grown-up Talent Show**  
**Irene Benefit Concert**



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Next issue: Feb. 22



Kindergarten students from Berlin Elementary became shining stars during the evening of January 31st as they performed a combination of singing and movement numbers during the school's Winter Concert. Photo: Chris Dodge

## Latin Dinner Dance a Success



This year's Latin Dinner Dance to benefit the U-32 Music Department, held on January 28,

was a huge success! U-32 parent Ann Gilbert see [Latin dinner on page 3](#)



## School based mentoring at Berlin Elementary School

Girls/Boyz First Mentoring has received a grant from the Vermont Mentoring Collaborative, to partner with Berlin Elementary School (BES) to implement a school based mentoring program at BES for the 2011-2012 school year. We hope to make a positive difference in the lives of Berlin Elementary School students by developing a school and community wide culture of mentoring, to help support students in developing increased self-esteem, improved communication and social skills, as well as a positive attitude about school. Mentors will provide a positive, consistent, open and caring role model for students to interact with. Mentors will meet with students, once a week at school, for about 50 minutes, over lunch and recess or perhaps before school. Mentors will read, play games, share conversation, shoot hoops, draw and just "be with" their mentees. We are looking for adults to get involved and support this program.

To become a mentor or for more information, please contact Wendy Farber, Coordinator of Girls/Boyz First Mentoring, at 229-4798 or email [wendy.freedom51@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.freedom51@gmail.com).

# Leadership by Design: Model Government Takes to the Statehouse

By Drew McNaughton

Monday's classroom is the Senate Floor. It's also the House Floor, and in the Committee rooms and marble hallways of the Vermont Statehouse. U-32's 8th grade Model Government project puts students in powerful positions. Students choose an issue from a preselected list of legislative topics, draft a bill to support that measure, and are graded (in part) on their ability to push their legislation through the Senate and House of their peers.

Weeks before the Model Government's trip to the Statehouse, students write persuasive essays in Language Arts, flexing their linguistic muscles around argument. The ability to lend clarity to complex issues, choose a side of a debate, and follow the line of reasoning to decisive conclusion is an important way to integrate cross-curricular learning objectives in project-based learning. All the Core Classes in

the Middle School take part in the lead up to the Model Government curriculum.

JB Hilferty, Middle School Social Studies teacher, is fired up about the student leadership that naturally emerges from the program. He

notes how fortunate U-32 is geographically. "One nice thing about this program is that we have it at our disposal. It's a five minute bus ride," he notes. While the Statehouse offers a curriculum package to other visiting schools, Hilferty notes that many students move through that prepackaged type of process unaffected, uninvolved. U-32's



U-32 middle school students visited the statehouse January 23 as part of their unit on Model Government.

program has sought to change that over the years.

By designing a program that incorporates the three primary subject areas of students, the teachers were able to work as a team to adapt and grow the program into what it is today. By

see [model government on page 3](#)

## The Economy of Me

By Deborah Wolf

On a winter day in December speaker, author and standup comic Colin Ryan stood before the U-32 high school student body and delivered a large dose of finance education. Through humor, honesty, personal stories, pop culture, and interactive dialogue, Ryan explained the danger of credit cards, the savings secrets of millionaires, and the value of creating

a budget. Teenagers often perceive finance education as boring, complicated, and irrelevant to their lives, yet Ryan has an effective way to get his point across. For the last two years, Ryan has been presenting "The Economy of Me," a high school presentation he created to help students better understand and manage their money.

Once Ryan loosened the students up using his stand-up comedic skills, they were open to his message: that "Your ability to manage your money directly affects your ability to have the life you want." He said that personal finance has a perception problem. Many find it boring and confusing but he said, "It's a fascinating, empowering, relevant part of all of our lives, and yet we rarely talk about it." He continued that "once you learn the basic concepts, the world of money opens up to you. Since finance is really just a way of talking about how much money you have (or don't have) in your wallet, it couldn't be more relevant to every one of us. Money isn't

boring when it's yours!"

Business teacher George Cook, who along with the business and math departments, brought Ryan to U-32, said "U-32 is committed to providing students with the highest level of comprehension in this very important area. Students can choose from U-32's dynamic and diverse course work with class

*Ryan explained the danger of credit cards, the savings secrets of millionaires, and the value of creating a budget.*

offerings such as Money Matters, Accounting I and II, and Financial Literacy." In addition, starting in next year, students will have the opportunity to experience "INC" (short for Incorporated) which is a new course being offered by the Business Department. "INC" is a course in which the classroom will be transformed into a business where the students will raise funds, build a business plan, sell a product or service, and handle all aspects of operating a business including accounting, budgeting, advertising, marketing, and working with a team structure to build success. The course is meant to allow students to learn firsthand about life in the business world by actually running the company!

Ryan asked the audience, "What would you like to do with your life, or what is something big you would like to buy if you had money?" Answers ranged from building a house, going to college, and starting my own business, to

see [money management on page 3](#)

## Board Meetings

U-32: first and third Wednesday at 6 p.m, February 15;  
 Berlin Elementary School: second Monday at 6:15 p.m., February 13;  
 Calais Elementary School: third Tuesday at 6:15 p.m., February 21;  
 Doty Elementary School, Worcester: second Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., February 8;  
 East Montpelier Elementary School: third Monday at 6:30 p.m., February 20;  
 Rumney Elementary School, Middlesex: February 15, 6 p.m.;  
 Washington Central Supervisory Union Executive Committee, February 22, 6:15 p.m. at WCSU.

**You can view current and past issues of Bus Stop on the web at [www.u32.org](http://www.u32.org)**

**Click on the newsletter link on the left of the page, then click on Bus Stop Conversations.**

### February 27- March 6: Winter Break

## Board Minutes

### Activities

#### U-32

February 10: Middle School Dance, 7:30 p.m.  
 February 15: Middle School Winter Concert, 7 p.m.  
 February 16: High School Winter Concert, 7 p.m.  
 March 8: Middle School Parent Meeting, 6:30 p.m.  
 March 10: Crystal Ball, 8 p.m.  
 March 15: Rising 7th grade parent info night 6:30 p.m.  
 March 23, 24: Variety Show, 7 p.m.  
 March 30: Spaghetti Dinner (see below)

#### Berlin

February 16: PTNA Meeting, 6:30 p.m.  
 February 16: Mens' Night, 7:30-9:30 p.m.  
 February 17: Community Spaghetti Dinner, 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
 February 23, 24: Celebration of Winter  
 March 5: Pre-town meeting, 6:00 p.m.

#### Calais

February 24: Winter Fun Day  
 March 14: Family pi Math Night, Wednesday, 6-7 p.m.  
 Come for fraction fun and bring a sweet or savory pie to share!

#### Doty

February 13: Artist in Residency: Circus Arts with Troy Wunderlee (all week, from 12:30 to 3:30)  
 February 17: Circus Demonstration, 2:30-3:30 p.m.  
 March 10: Doty Community Fundraiser: Supper and Fiddler's concert at Town Hall

#### East Montpelier

February 8: PTNO meeting  
 February 11: Winter Carnival, 4-7 p.m.  
 February 16: Technology night, 6-7:30 p.m., 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders present student created projects  
 February 20: Facilities Meeting, 5:30 p.m.  
 March 22: Pops Concert, 6:00 p.m.

#### Rumney

February 18: Grown-up Talent Show, see right ⇨  
 February 20: All school meeting, 9:15 a.m.  
 February 24: Winter Carnival  
 March 12: All school meeting 9:15 a.m.

### Doty Memorial School seeks two new board members

The role of a school board member is to collaborate with the other board members on "big picture" issues and set the direction for the district.

Principal Barbara-Anne Komons-Montroll welcomes Worcester community members to stop by to find out more information on serving the community in this important way. Or give her a call at 223-5656.

#### U-32, January 4, 2012

- ◆ Discussed the budget drafts then heard comments from 19 members of the audience.
- ◆ Ginny Burley reported the Barre Tech Center will be increasing tuition.
- ◆ Stephanie Taylor spoke of the WCSU administrators participating in "literacy walks" at each school to help in the evaluation of literacy best practices.
- ◆ The board voted to present a budget of \$13,594,212.
- ◆ Approved the U-32 District Warning.
- ◆ Approved the 2012-13 Agreement to join the Winooski Valley Region Public School Choice Collaborative.
- ◆ Authorized the superintendent to award a student transportation bid.
- ◆ Approved athletics coaches and volunteers as presented.

#### Rumney, January 10, 2012

- ◆ Adam Rosen announced that he is interviewing for a principal position.
- ◆ Discussed Act 153 with Commissioner Armando Vilaseca with additional questions answered by Vaughn Altemus, Education Finance Manager.
- ◆ Approved the 2012-13 school budget in the amount of \$2,295,522.
- ◆ Set budget information sessions for February 18, 9:00 a.m. at the Red Hen Baking Cafe and March 5, 6:00 p.m. at Rumney School.
- ◆ Approved the warning for Town Meeting.
- ◆ Authorized the Executive Committee and the Superintendent to award the student transportation bid. ◆

### Rumney's Got TALENT GROWN-UP Talent Show and BAKE-OFF

Saturday, February 18, 6 p.m.  
 Rumney School, Middlesex

Join us for a fun and entertaining talent show of song, dance, poetry, storytelling & more....

You won't want to miss teachers and community members on stage!



There will also be a BAKE-OFF with PRIZES for the best cookie, brownie, muffin/cake and gluten-free treat.

Email Julia, [jchafets@rumney.org](mailto:jchafets@rumney.org) to submit your treat!

\$5/person, \$15/family

Come out and support our before- and after-school programs!

Sponsored by Rumney Community Connections  
 Info: Julia Chafets, 223-5429, ext. 322.

### Let's Not Forget Irene Benefit Concert

Friday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.  
 U-32 Auditorium and Atrium



The evening will begin with a nice dessert, coffee and tea in the atrium, with music to follow at 7:00.

Dave Keller, Vermont blues aficionado, opens with an acoustic set followed by the amazing Sara Grace, of Sara Grace and the Suits, also playing an acoustic set. The evening will conclude with a rare performance by guitar great Paul Asbell, a Burlington legend who plays with Kilimanjoro, was a member of the Big Joe Burrell Unknown Blues Band and was also guitar mentor to Trey Anastasio of Phish.

Each ticket holder will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win one of several great prizes, including a weekend stay at the luxurious Pitcher Inn in Warren, VT, an overnight stay and 2 lift tickets at the Stowe Mountain Resort, 2 lift tickets to Jay Peak or 4 lift tickets to Bolton Valley. The goal is to raise \$10,000 for families in our district who are still struggling to recover from the storm.

Tickets: \$30 for adults and \$20 for students, are available from Paul Dayton or Ken Saxe at U-32 throughout each school day and from Kristie Ferguson in the U-32 office. (Cash or check made out to U-32 Special Acct/Irene Benefit). Tickets are also available in Montpelier at Buch Spieler Music on Langdon St. (Cash or check only). Information: Paul Dayton, Community Connections, 229-0321, ext. 2242, [pdayton@u32.org](mailto:pdayton@u32.org) or Ken Saxe, [ksaxe@u32.org](mailto:ksaxe@u32.org).

**U-32 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE SPAGHETTI DINNER**

**Friday, March 30, 2012**

Seatings at 5:30 and 7:00 p.m.

**Meat or Vegetarian Pasta • Tossed Salad  
 Homemade Garlic Bread • Drinks & Dessert**

~ Evening Includes ~  
**DC Raffle • Silent Auction • Live Music**

Tickets available in advance from any 8th grader or at the door  
 Adults \$10 - Families \$30 - Students/Seniors (62+) \$5  
 Take-Out Orders Available for \$10 Each  
 Proceeds to benefit the Annual U-32 8th Grade Trip to  
 Washington, DC 229-0321 1554/retail@u32.org

### A message from Central Vermont New Directions Coalition:

Youth who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism, a chronic medical disease at some point in their lives, than those who begin drinking at 21.

*Bus Stop Conversations* is published 16 times in the school year by Washington Central Friends of Education, Inc., a private, non-profit corporation committed to strengthening the communication and cooperation between residents of the five district towns of Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, and Worcester, and the Washington Central Supervisory Union schools. No tax money is used for the production or publication. Send correspondence to: Editor, Deborah Wolf, Washington Central Friends of Education, PO Box 324, Montpelier, VT 05601; e-mail: [dwolf@u32.org](mailto:dwolf@u32.org)



U-32 middle school students toured the Vermont Senate January 23 as part of their unit on Model Government.

### model government from pg. 1

responding to student voices, and integrating diverse approaches to learning, the teachers have found ways to involve a wide array of learners and avenues to success.

Teachers generate a diverse list of issues representing cross-curricular and contemporary significance. The topics this session ranged from Childhood Obesity to Life Imprisonment for Teens. Based on interest, students select the subject area that compels them, and are broken into committees of equal number based as much as possible on their interest level.

Each of the six committee members has a designated role, from Committee Chair to Vice Clerk. Student roles are clearly outlined, and structured forms scaffold the complex process underpinning the creation and passage of a bill.

As closely as possible, the actions undertaken by the students will model and reflect the political realities of their adult counterparts. The pressure's on. Student performance is marked by passage and failure of legislation. This means

### money management from pg. 1

traveling and buying a Ferrari.

Ryan's first lesson of reasonable spending is "Drive like the Rich." After showing movies of fancy cars, Ryan explained that fewer than 25% of millionaires bought a new car in the last four years; most do not drive luxury cars, and most own well-built, practical vehicles that they keep for a long time. So if you drive like a millionaire, you are practical – the secret to being a millionaire isn't making money it's keeping it.

Ryan's goal is to instill in students the awareness that marketers are constantly trying to pry their money from them, and that they shouldn't buy what they can't afford.

The audience got very quiet as Ryan explained that from a financial point of view credit cards will be "the number one threat in your life." He said that people's lives are ruined by credit cards all the time. And then he explained how to outsmart credit cards. He said credit card companies want you to borrow more than you have and they want you to take a long time to pay it off because when you pay later, you pay more. His advice: "If you have to borrow it, then you can't afford it. And if you do use credit cards you should pay as much as you can as fast as you can."

The presentation seemed effective as students bantered back and forth with Ryan and laughter abounded. "When I realized we were halfway through, I was disappointed because I didn't want it to be over," said U-32 junior Nathan.

Ryan was hired through a grant from the Association of Vermont Credit Unions to address the national concern about financial literacy. They have a simple mission: Get teens to care

that each student is a lobbyist as well as a lawmaker.

After the committee roles and responsibilities are delegated within each group, students ask central questions to focus their legislation. By utilizing a spectrum of critical thinking skills, students are asked to respond to

questions ranging from "Why is this bill being proposed?" to "Does the bill infringe upon Constitutional rights for Vermonters or other US citizens?"

The day moves forward, and real drama is sure to ensue. Most 'lobbyists' are finding ways to buy their fellow legislator a chocolate milk in the cafeteria; buying time to bend their ear on a specific issue. Others find trading votes an effective means of boosting the passage of their bills.

As the education world buzzes to push 21st Century Learning – with its focus on Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships – the U-32 Model Government program seems designed for the future. As the focused eighth graders walk the Statehouse halls, straightening their ties, as they construct the rigorously designed linguistic mechanics of law, they are stepping into roles many may find themselves in years from now. Beyond just 'playing Senator,' the students are engaged in a process illustrating their own ability to access their government, discovering the interconnected nature of subject areas, and reinforcing their capacity to create change in the world. ❖

about and understand their personal finances, so they grow up to be more responsible, successful and happy adults. In 2008, only 48% of high school students could pass the Jump\$tart National Coalition's survey for financial literacy.

In closing Ryan showed the students what a typical Vermont high school student spends monthly on gas (\$137), car payments (\$220), car insurance, clothes, cell phones (\$67), groceries, rent (\$699), utilities, snacks, entertainment etc. He said that according to the "Lifestyle Project," the average Vermont high school student spends between \$25,000 and \$35,000 a year. And his final message was to save. He left the students thinking about how they could spend a little less to better reach their life goals. ❖



### HOST FAMILIES WANTED

For two weeks this summer our local communities will be hosting a group of 30 students from China. These students will be housed in pairs with local families; they will spend daytime hours "at school" along with a group of local students, and evenings & weekends with their host families. This will be the second of these summer exchanges coordinated locally by Community Connections; last



Writing time during the Rumney first grade daily literacy block is a great time for kids to get their thoughts, ideas, hopes and dreams on paper. They can write anything they want during this time: reports, stories, letters, etc.



Sixth grader Madison Lathrop accompanies Berlin Elementary's fifth and sixth grade chorus on John Ondrasik's hit, *I Can't Stand to Fly*, during the school's January 31st Winter Concert. Photo: Chris Dodge

Parent 2 Parent Presents

### Staying Connected: Parenting Your Adolescents

Tuesday, February 21, 2012, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.  
(rescheduled from Jan. 17 due to weather)  
Main Street Middle School  
The public is invited

Our kids are growing up and becoming more independent very quickly. They may push us away one minute and need us the next. Their moods are changing. Their lives are busy. Their friends are new. It's hard to keep up with them. How do we parent these adolescents?

Debby Haskins returns to MSMS to help parents develop the skills that will make life easier. Learn more about the teenage brain, get more comfortable talking about issues, set behavioral expectations, and follow through with consequences. Stay connected.

Parent 2 Parent is an ongoing support and education program of Community Connections and Central Vermont New Directions Coalition

For information visit [www.cvndc.org](http://www.cvndc.org) or Ann Gilbert:  
[agilbert@sover.net](mailto:agilbert@sover.net) or 223-4949 ext.2



### Latin dinner from pg. 1

said she was so happy and proud to have such a community event with plentiful, delicious food, student participation in so many areas, parent involvement, polished performances by the Jazz Band and the impressive Middle School Jazz Band, decorated atrium, and multigenerational fun!

Kudos to Tom Cate, Anne Decker, Andrea Bonomico, Sara Wolf and ALL those students who worked hard all day as kitchen helpers, wait staff, hosts, drink-makers, decorations crew, clean up, musicians, and their parents! ❖

July fifteen local families hosted visiting kids and reported it to be an incredible experience! The likely dates for this summer's visit will be June 23 to July 7, 2012, so we are actively recruiting host families and local teens to serve as peer leaders. If you are interested in learning more about these opportunities, please contact Ginny Burley or Bill Merrylees at Community Connections, 223-3456.