



## TREK 2 INDIA

*Salem School Superintendent Dr. Alan Seibert recently returned from a 10-day trip to India that took him to Mumbai, Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. The goal of the trip, that was part of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents "India as a Global Partner" program, was to connect school leaders from each country, so their students can communicate better with one another in the future. The trip was totally funded by 40 different companies that have offices in the Commonwealth and a number of civic partners, including the Salem Rotary Club and a Salem businessman.*

*Before making this trip, you and the other members of your traveling party spent time studying the Indian culture at the University of Virginia and meeting with economists, political scientists and teachers, but I understand it was impossible for any book or lecture to properly prepare you for the reality of the world's largest democracy*

The realization that resonated with our delegation the most is that India is a contradiction. You see incredible wealth and tremendous poverty; ancient traditions and advanced technology. We encountered highly engaged children and yet there are masses who are illiterate and children without means or with special needs who are not even in school. To visit India is to be constantly trying to reconcile these contradictions. A story that encapsulated this more than anything for me occurred when I observed a camel drawn cart passing a parked Mercedes Benz and that the man guiding the camel was on his cell phone. Therein is the contradiction that is India.

*The main objective of the trip was to find out how Virginia's economy is tied to India's and how educators can use this link to help students become more globally competitive. How does that relate directly to Salem?*

What I want the children in Salem to gain is an understanding that, while there are adults in our country who are nervous about the global economy and people who are worried about the United States being eclipsed by India or China, they are equipped to compete and succeed in the global economy. Although many of our graduates continue their education elsewhere, global awareness and emerging technologies will empower them to participate in the global economy from anywhere in the world, including right here in Salem.

*Students back here in Salem were able to follow your journey on a "wiki" page called "Where in the World is Dr. Seibert?" I understand these students already have been connecting with students in India.*

Thanks to the time, talent, and expertise of our Instructional Technology Resource Teachers who developed the

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Dr. Seibert with a student in India



Dr. Seibert in front of the Taj Mahal



Dr. Seibert with two students in India.



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wiki, we already have elementary classrooms collaborating with the Mira Model School in Delhi and before I had returned a business teacher at Andrew Lewis was investigating a joint project. Last year, a student at West Salem introduced his peers to a family in India using real time video conferencing called Skype, but the 10 1/2 hour time difference presents a challenge for student-to-student interaction. Rather than expecting children in one country participate late at night or extremely early in the morning, we're using something called Voice Threads. This allows students to integrate photographs and other media with their own narration of their work and post it on the wiki.

*That is a great example of utilizing cutting edge technology, but I understand you were able to take part I some of the old-fashioned interaction, as well, during your trip.*

My goal in every step of this was to interact with children, so whenever we got to go in the classrooms my priority was to meet children, kneel by their desk, discover what they were doing, talk about their learning and hear from them directly. As a former science teacher I visited many science and math classes but I also spent time in an accounting class where students were working on a topic of interest in Salem Schools, personal finance.

*You visited a number of private schools and were scheduled to tour some of the state schools in Jaipur before they were shut down by, of all things, the flu virus. What was the overall impression you and the other educators had of India's schools?*

It's always very dangerous to make

comparisons between the United States education system and most other nations. In the United States we teach all children and that is a difficult concept even for Indian teachers to understand, especially that universal access to education in the United States includes compulsory education through age 18 and accommodating children with special needs. Most of the teachers we visited with are serving children who want to be in school from families who place a high value on education. The classes often had between 30 and 40 students, but they were highly engaged. Diversity in the Indian classrooms we visited involved serving students of different religions, but not children with different aptitudes and abilities.

*This trip was originally scheduled to take place a year ago, but terrorists struck your hotel and several other venues in Mumbai just before you were scheduled to leave killing 178 people and injuring more than 300. What was the atmosphere like while you were there?*

Representatives of our delegation held a conference call the day after the attacks and we were committed to re-schedule the trip because as educators we recognize that crimes rooted in ignorance and hate can only be countered with education and understanding. They had intense security at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai including an armored car parked out front. The hotel was very, very secure and, in fact, former President Bush was there the night before we arrived. The hotels and popular tourist locations featured good security and most all of the people we encountered were very gracious. The Indian people were very welcoming and the school children were full of questions about America. Just as in our country, it is a very small number of people who cause most of the prob-

lems.

*As a member of the Salem Rotary Club, you had the opportunity to visit Rotarians in India and I understand they were as service oriented as the folks here in Salem.*

I met with leaders from the Queen's Necklace Rotary Club in Mumbai who last year focused their efforts on supporting the families of police and soldiers who were injured or killed in the terrorist attacks. They have since resumed their club's primary project of supporting a school for children who are hearing impaired and have an additional disability because while there are a small number of schools specifically for children with hearing or sight impairment, children with multiple disabilities are routinely excluded.

*You were able to visit the Taj Mahal at sunrise and also ride an elephant to the Amber Fort. What was that experience like?*

The Taj Mahal was impressive, but I honestly enjoyed my time in the schools more. In Jaipur, the ride up the mountain to the Amber Fort was very bouncy and my roommate and I had a very old and slow elephant, so most of our friends passed us on the way up the mountain!!

By Mike Stevens



**THE TAJ MAHAL**



## EMPLOYEE NEWS

Katelyn Coker, daughter of **Debbie Coker** (Central), has enjoyed her first roles in musical theater this fall and winter. She performed in *They Chose Me*, a play about children's views of adoption which ended in November. Katelyn is now performing in the Mill Mountain Theater Conservatory presentation of *Annie, Jr.* which runs from December 10 through December 20.

Trisha Diane Lewis, daughter of **Terri Lewis** (ES), was married to Brandon Everett Martin, October 17, 2009 in Blacksburg, VA. They are residing in Maidens, VA near Richmond, VA.

Beth Jordan, daughter of **Kathy Jordan** (Central), was married to Elliott Sperlazza in Fredericksburg, VA on August 8, 2009.

**Susan Bowman** (SHS) and **Gussie Freedman** (SHS) attended an IB workshop at Patrick Henry High School in Ashland, VA. Three Latin students with Sponsor Susan Bowman attended the Virginia Junior Classical League Convention in Richmond November 23rd and 24th.

**Jane Sandel** (SHS) attended an IB Coordinators Workshop in Arlington, VA.

**Janie Entsminger's** (Retiree) daughter, Jennifer Entsminger is engaged to Chad DeHaven. The wedding will take place on July 10, 2010.

**Hilda and Jim Paxton's** (SHS) daughter, Jessica, was married to Scott Mackaro of Baltimore, MD on August 1, 2009 in Salem. Scott and Jessica honeymooned in the Bahamas. The cou-

ple resides in Denver. Jessica is working in Boulder, Colorado at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and her husband works for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, also in Boulder.

Jennifer Paxton, daughter of **Hilda and Jim Paxton** (SHS) will graduate December 19th with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Radford University.

**Beth Cook** (SHS) and her husband climbed to the top of Half Dome in Yosemite this summer. The hike is 15 miles long with a 4,800 foot elevation gain.



**Beth Cook** and her husband, **Aaron** at the top of Half Dome in Yosemite.

**Mark Ingerson** (SHS) earned a first diamond degree of membership with the National Forensic League (NFL). To receive this prestigious national recognition Mark earned a total of 1,791 points representing coaching success over several years. Under his direction, students earned over 17,910 credit points. On attaining a total of 1,500 points, coaches are entitled to wear a diamond-set NFL key or pin. Mark is invited to receive this special recognition in June, 2010 at the Lincoln Financial Group/NFL National Speech and Debate Tournament in Kansas City, Missouri.

Derek Pendleton, son of **Rhonda Pendleton** (SHS) is studying Criminal Justice at Virginia Western. He is playing for the VWCC Men's Blue Star Basketball team.

**Lisa Sutherland** (WS) achieved Na-

tional Board Certification for Early/Middle Literacy in November, 2009.

Keith Schwizer, son of **Eileen Schwizer** (WS) married Leah Wolter on August 22, 2009.

**Adam Simpson** (ALMS) married Hannah Joyce, a fellow math teacher at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke on August 22, 2009. They were mar-

ried at the Duck Pond on Virginia Tech's campus at the gazebo location where Adam proposed. The reception was held across the street at the Holiday Inn University. They are currently enjoying married life in nearby Christiansburg.

**Jaime Gibson** (ALMS) was married to Charles Balow on November, 7, 2009. The wedding ceremony was at 5:00 in the evening at Southview United Methodist Church with a beautiful reception following at The Corinthian Ballroom. The couple lives in Roanoke,

Karl Crotts, son of **Bonnie Crotts** (SS) has arrived home from Afghanistan. Bonnie wants to thank everyone for their prayers for his safe return.

**Jeff Hodges** (SS) won the "Best Craftsmanship" award for his entry in the gallery of the Blue Ridge Potters show and sale. His entry titled, "All the Tea in China" was based on the show's theme, "Tea for the Tenth". His entry was judged from more than 30 entries submitted.

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Congratulations goes to **Susan Hannah** (Central) on the birth of her grandson, Griffin James Barbour, born on October 29, 2009.

Congratulations goes to **Cindy Arrington** (WS) on the birth of her granddaughter, Charlotte Hope born on October 18, 2009.

Congratulations goes to **Kami Buchholz** (WS) on the birth of her son, James Edward, born on November 22, 2009.

## OUR CONDOLENCES

Our sincere sympathy goes to **David** and **Karen Wiseman** (ALMS) on the loss of David's father; **Dottie Bull** (ALMS) on the loss of her mother; **Judith** (ALMS) on the loss of her grandmother.

## THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

These are tips from our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Quarterly Newsletter. Here are 9 tips for a Holiday Season with more ease and joy by Marilyn M. Bradford, LCSW, CFMW, M.Ed.

Tip #1 **Be aware of all of the places you tend to slip into addictive and/or compulsive behaviors.** We tend to think of addiction in terms of Alcohol or Over Eating but addictive and compulsive behaviors show up in many forms, particularly during the holidays. Here are some that seen:

- Taking on The Peachmaker role—this is where people feel compelled to make sure everyone is “OK” and to settle compulsive holiday

problem solver for everyone.

- Being addicted to Perfectionism—you have to have the perfect gift, the perfect dinner or party, the perfect ceremony.
- Over Spending—you can't seem to stop yourself from buying expensive presents you really can't afford, or taking everyone out to eat, or buying rounds of drinks, or too many decorations or running up your credit cards in a variety of ways.
- Over doing—if you find yourself exhausted but can't seem to stop and take time for yourself, you may be addicted to over doing.

Tip #2 **Be honest with yourself** in your assessment of what your experiences have been like during past holiday seasons, what they are likely to be like this year, and what you can do versus what would be too much or unhealthy or too stressful for you to do. You have to take charge of the holidays, not become their victim.

Tip #3 **Remember that you have a choice.** You can moderate the time, money, energy that you put into anything. I have clients with very toxic families who say: “I have to go home for Christmas”. I say: “OK, if you do choose to go home, go for a shorter time, or stay at a hotel, or do anything that will make the trip easier on you. Always be willing to leave if things get bad”. Figure out what you require, and make your choices from that point. You can ask a question like “What can I contribute to this without sacrificing ME?”

Tip #4 **Let go of your EXPECTATIONS** of yourself, and others for the holidays. Let go of worrying about “fitting in”, and what other people think of you. If you are willing to be disapproved of, you have much more choice. We are trained to: “never upset mom, or dad, or the apple cart or whatever.” That we “have to” take care of “your poor sister, uncle, the entire dinner” etc. None of that is true, but because we have carried those ideas from childhood, we think they are real,

even sacred. Are they really?

Tip #5 **Let go of your JUDGEMENTS** of everyone, including yourself. It's just an interesting point of view what anyone is choosing. You don't have to resist and react as you did as a child, and you don't have to stop being you just because others want you to be in your box they have always put you in. If Mom is doing her critical or worry thing and Dad is yelling, so what? It really has nothing to do with you, even if you think it does.

Tip #6 **Be aware of the ROLES** you are asked to and agree to play. It may be of the dutiful daughter, or the Dad who provides everything, the Mom who puts on the big dinner, or any other role you are expected to play. Yes, you may be a mom or the provider for you family, but you don't have to step into automatic mode and do everything everyone has come to expect of you in that role. You have a choice, and you can change things this year.

Tip #7 **Ask questions!!** What would I like to the holidays to be like? What would bring more true joy into this time? How much time can I spend on \_\_\_\_\_ without it costing me too much? What am I actually expected to be or do? Does that work for me? What would work for me? What nourishes me? What would be fun for me?

Tip #8 **Find something you like about the holidays and maximize that.** I've always loved Christmas music—yes that corny stuff. I play it all the time during the holiday season. I also like to make cookies, so I do that. When you make sure you are doing the you like to do it, it makes some of the other stuff more tolerable.

Tip #9 **Make sure you make time for the things you do that nourish you.** This may be exercise, or photography, or horseback riding, or having lunch with friends. Whatever it is for you —DO IT!!!

**GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF NOT JUDGING YOU!!!!**



# THE COORDINATORS' CORNER



## HEALTH & PE Sandy Hill

Susan Miller's workshop, "Crossing the Midline," was a big success as the school year began, so I am listing her email address, as there have been a number of requests to contact her. The email is [smiller64@RADFORD.EDU](mailto:smiller64@RADFORD.EDU). If you have trouble getting in contact with her, feel free to give me a call.

There are lots of relatively new PE programs this year. All six schools have access to archery equipment. We are using "The First Tee" golf organization in some schools for instructional purposes, and participating in "Get Ahead with Bowlers," an in-school bowling program. In addition to the regular battery of Fitness Tests, taken twice a year in grades 4-10, we are looking at the PE Challenge from PE

Central as another means of assessing student fitness. Programs such as "Dance, Dance Revolution" are also being used at some elementary schools and a new program based on meaningful movement called "GeoFitness" is being piloted at East Salem.

Childhood obesity continues to be a topic that requires our attention. The School Health Advisory Board has formed a sub-committee to continue to focus on this issue and it's prevalence in Salem; a report will be forthcoming in May. Body Mass Index studies, although not the best way to determine the overall health status of students, may still be used to gather baseline data on student weight issues. An initial BMI study was completed about eighteen months ago, and provided some initial data to consider as we begin to study this nationwide problem.

As we have fewer daylight hours heading into winter I would like to remind you that the Staff Wellness Committee representatives at each school are working hard to find exercise options for those wanting to participate. One such opportunity is the Fitness Room at ALMS, which is unlocked for your use from 3:45-6:00 PM each day that school is in session. Please take advantage of this and other opportunities and have a healthy holiday season.



## HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE Terry LaRocco

Holiday Greetings! It seems to me as though this school year is flying by, and I wonder if anyone else is feeling the same way! It looks as though the winter months will be just as quick with many things to do and experience in Social Studies. Beginning in January, everyone should see some new textbooks floating around their schools. Yes Virginia...it's textbook adoption time! Committees will start their work

after the end of the first semester, so get ready!

Professional development opportunities available:

The Virginia Department of Education is seeing experienced History & Social Science teachers to serve on the summer 2010 Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Content Review committees. I would encourage you to think about applying for this position on a state committee. Please contact me for additional information: [tlarocco@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:tlarocco@salem.k12.va.us).

Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation's Summer Teacher Institute for 2010—Now Accepting Applications for their summer workshop.

- July 11-16, 2010 at Jamestown Settlement and the Yorktown Victory Center
- Covers history of Jamestown and American Revolution
- Hotel, meals, transportation, stipend and materials provided

Follow this link for more information: <http://historyisfun.org/teacher->

## LANGUAGE ARTS John Bolte

Be sure to visit the Pearson Perspectives website and explore the Understanding Scoring page. This page is designed to help you gain a better understanding of the SOL Direct Writing Assessments, understand the use of the rubric in scoring student writing, and develop consistency in scoring actual student work. The sample papers are actual student responses to a prompt. Veteran teachers and those who have participated in scoring writing predictors over the years will recognize these papers from the old NCS Mentor program.

The new design makes access to anchor papers and rubrics easier. Score the samples and then see how they were originally scored to "anchor" yourself to the rubric.

A teacher's manual distributed by the state superintendent of instruction offers lesson plans and resources for all grade levels for teaching about the causes and ramifications of the Holocaust and genocide. More information on this manual, as well as links to the websites of the Virginia Holocaust Museum in Richmond and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, are available on the Language Arts Moodle page.

The Virginia State Reading Association will hold its Annual Conference on the weekend of March 11-13 in Virginia Beach. The conference agenda features a luncheon with author/illustrator Jan Brett ([The Mitten](#)).



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## **MATHEMATICS**

**Beth Swain**

The school year is well underway and I hope you are having a great one! Thanks to all of you who have opened your doors and allowed me to visit your classes. Keep up the good work! Please remember I would love to visit, or just be an extra set of hands. If you are in need of ideas, have concerns, or just want to talk about math, please contact me anytime.

The K-12 Vertical Mathematics team is continuing its work. We are revising the essential skills list that we created last year so that it aligns to the new 2009 mathematics SOLs. I hope for this to be completed by the first of the year. Next, the team will focus on creating a library of

resources for the new material in the 2009 mathematics SOLs. This library of resources should help teachers as they begin to teach material new to their grade level or class.

The Curriculum Framework for the 2009 mathematics SOLs has been approved and should be posted on the VDOE website by the first of the year. I will add it to the math resource folder as soon as it is posted. This will be an important document as we implement the new mathematics SOLs. In addition, the crosswalk document is being developed and should be out by spring.

Be on the lookout for an email from me about the SOL Test review committees. With new SOLs come new SOL tests. It will be more important than ever to have representation on the review committees.

I hope you will consider this opportunity. This is a chance to have input on the SOL questions. I hope you will take part in this worthwhile and eye opening experience.

Finally, don't forget to utilize the Math Resources folder on the G drive under the Common folder. There are numerous resources there for you to use to guide your planning. I hope the beginning to the second semester goes smoothly for you. As always, contact me anytime for your mathematical needs. I will be happy to assist you. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday!

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**THE CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF WISHES YOU**

**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**AND**

**A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!**