

RWA



News

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

APRIL 2015

A Word From The Administration

Mr. Tony Pita, Principal

Mme Nathalie Cheff, Vice-Principal

Ms. Chantal Juhasz, Vice-Principal



Spring weather may continue to elude us, but time is certainly marching forward and the end of the school year is rapidly approaching! Springtime sports, such as rugby, golf, and tennis, have recently gotten or are about to get underway. Students and staff are also beginning to think about and plan for the upcoming end-of-year exams.

The Montreal Regional Science & Technology Fair took place on March 29–31 (*see page 3 for details*). A number of Royal West Academy students participated with seven different projects, and we are very proud of their achievements. Congratulations go to Matteo Cattelan & Jonathan Fodi and to Stefan Robb & Jaden Green who were awarded with Great Distinction awards. Ashley Saad & Charlotte Ouimet, Erik Séguin, Alexandra Paquette & Chelsea Ridgmay, and Lia Loebenberg all earned Highest Distinction Awards as well as individual prizes for their projects. Niraj Dayanandan earned a Gold Medal, among other awards, and will be attending the Provincial Science Fair in the coming weeks. Congratulations to all participating students for all your hard work and also to the teachers of the Science Department for your continued support!

This year's musical, *Nothing to Lose!*, a Mr. Floen original, went off smashingly on April 14–17 (*see page 7 for details*). The students involved put on superb performances each evening, including a Dinner Theatre for Friday's performance. Obviously these productions do not happen without enormous amounts of time and effort by those in front of and behind the lights. A huge congratulations and thank you to all involved.

The RWA Foundation hosted a fundraising event in conjunction with the Segal Centre for Performing Arts on April 15. That evening's production of *Travesties*, directed by RWA alum Jacob Tierney, was attended by more than 100 RWA supporters. The play was fun, witty, and clever; a big thank you to those who showed their support to our school!

On April 17, five RWA students participated in the annual EMSB Public Speaking Competition (*see page 5 for details*). Participating students qualified after winning our local RWA Public Speaking Competition. Royal West Academy is very proud of our delegates: Madison McLaughlan (Secondary III) won gold, Logan Stack (Secondary IV) and Chloe Karam (Secondary V) both brought home bronze, and Liam Baum (Secondary I) and Gabriel Isabella (Secondary II) represented RWA with distinction. Congratulations to all the participants and to the English Language Arts teachers that supported them.

Royal West Academy was recently graciously recognized for our fundraising efforts during Tyndale Week last December (*see page 15 for details*). This year, our school raised over \$8000 to help the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, which provides educational opportunities, from pre-K to adult, for those in less fortunate circumstances. Royal West Academy continues to be committed in providing



support to the important work that is accomplished at Tyndale St-Georges.

Earth week took place at Royal West Academy on April 20–24. Students and staff were busy organizing and participating in activities to raise awareness for this important cause. A variety of activities took place over the course of the week including a Green Bean feast, morning yoga, and a fast fashion workshop (with clothing swap). Special thanks to the staff and

Environment Committee for organizing these fantastic activities.

On April 22, the administrative assistants (i.e., our secretaries) were recognized for their hard work and dedication to RWA. We would like to thank Ms. Taylor, Ms. Pisto, Ms. Karabatsos, Ms. Spiroulas, Ms. Ibrahim, and Mme Thomasson, for all they do to make RWA a great place to work and learn!

SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

How sweet it was!

The dessert concert was a great success, raising close to \$4000! There were so many luscious desserts offered that the event had to be moved from the cafeteria into the boy's gym—and even then it was standing room only. That didn't seem to slow down consumption rates as everyone made at least one big trip to the dessert table and many logged quite a few more.

The students' performances were outstanding. We heard from the Secondary I choir, under Ms. Macleod's direction. What a great addition to Royal West Academy. Sheila brings joy to music.

The RWA Jazz Band and the Honour Band, both under Ms. Purdy's direction, never fail to please. The incredible progress in both of these groups since the last Winter Concert was evident to everyone. They've gone from good to great.

The Bardolators put on a very funny scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with some astoundingly good bad acting. Three excerpts from the musical, a dance routine from the Dance Show, and a special guest appearance by one of RWA's student rock bands, Fat Chance, rounded out the program.

What a production!! Congratulations to the student performers, the teachers who give so generously of their time to guide the creation of these amazing performances, and all the help that goes into these productions from ECA coordinators to the amazing sound and light team.

Nothing emphasizes the need for a better performing arts centre for our students more than seeing the incredible talent and energy of the performers and the positive impact they have on everyone who comes into contact with them.

You can play a part!

We are always looking for volunteers to join the RWA Foundation. No matter your experience or time available, everyone can play a role. If you have any questions or fundraising ideas, contact Jasmin Uhthoff, Vice-President, at rwafoundation@gmail.com or visit us at <http://rwaf.ca>.

Make a donation! Just go to our website at <http://rwaf.ca> and give what you can. Every donation takes us closer to transforming our 80-year-old auditorium into a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre for our children.



This year's Junior Robotics Competition took place on April 23–24. Students from the Robotics Club participated in several fields and brought home several awards, including the bronze medal in the Beatles category and the gold and bronze medals in the Soccer category. Congratulations to all the staff and students involved!

The annual Dessert Concert took place on April 24. It was a fantastic affair with an impressive variety of performances including the A Cappella choir, a selection of songs from the *Nothing to Lose!* musical, a rock group, a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the Bardolators, the RWA Jazz Band, and the RWA Honour Band. Guests were treated to a wide selection of tasty desserts following the show. Congratulations to all the students and staff involved in this wonderful evening.

Once again this year, we must acknowledge the incredible efforts of our Parent Volunteers. On April 3–6, a number of parents gave their time once again to improve the physical appearance of our school. Led by Mr. Mendelson and Mr. Rametta, volunteers undertook some impressive renovations to our Staff Lounge. Thank you to all the parent volunteers for your continued support of RWA. Your efforts have helped make our school a place we can all be proud of.

The Home & School Association hosted our annual RWA Book Fair held on April 30 and May 1. Students used this opportunity to purchase books on their summer reading lists. Proceeds from this event go to support our school library. Summer Reading lists can be found on our RWA website.

Just a friendly reminder for students who take public transit to and from school to remember that they represent Royal West Academy far beyond the walls of our school. Please continue to use appropriate behaviour while travelling on buses and trains, ensuring that the community-at-large knows that Royal West truly is the best!

As the end of the school year approaches, please be aware that last day of RWA Cafeteria services will be May 29, 2015. The cafeteria will not be open during the last week of classes, nor will it be open during exams.

Students are advised to bring their lunch or to make other arrangements for the period of June 1–23, 2015.

Finally, documents detailing how to calculate a student's weighted average (www.royalwestacademy.com/?page_id=2161) and how to better understand moderation (www.royalwestacademy.com/?page_id=2166) have been posted on our RWA website. This information that may be of interest and assistance to students and parents alike.

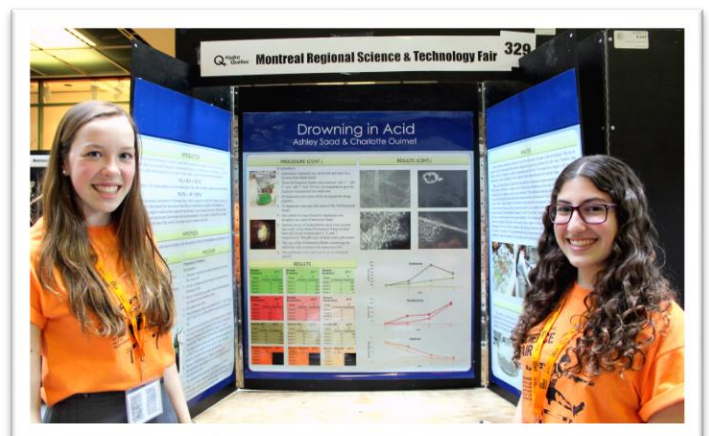
Regional Science & Technology Fair

By Lindsay Saad



The Regional Science & Technology Fair took place over the course of three days on March 29–31 in the J.W. McConnell Building at Concordia University. The first day was reserved for public viewing. As I entered the exposition, I sensed an atmosphere of excitement and eagerness amongst the students presenting their projects. There were rows and rows of keen participants sharing their results and work to the public. Additionally, the building was swarming with visitors. Students gladly answered all of their questions with smiles from ear to ear.

On the second day, the projects were evaluated by the judges. "I was very nervous, but excited at the same time," says Ashley Saad who, with her partner Charlotte Ouimet (both Secondary V students), were two of many students privileged to represent Royal West Academy at this event. Their project was on ocean acidification and its effect on plankton. They went to a lab every day after school for two weeks and worked extremely hard



on their project. This goes to show that these students put their blood, sweat, and tears into their projects.

The third and final day was when the award ceremony took place. Parents and siblings were invited to join their children at the ceremony. The crowded building was full of students and their parents. Royal West Academy is proud to announce that many of their students won awards for their exceptional science fair projects. Here is the list of awards from our RWA students:

- Bcaa Effervescent Tablets by Matteo Cattelan and Jonathan Fodi: Great Distinction
- Drowning in Acid by Ashley Saad and Charlotte Ouimet : Highest Distinction, Concordia University – Department of Geography, Planning, and Environment Award
- Pinnacle of Protection by Erik Séguin: Highest Distinction, Concordia University Award for Outstanding Achievement in Computer Science & Software Engineering
- Quack I'm Covered In Black by Alexandra Paquette and Chelsea Ridgway: Highest Distinction, McGill University – Department of Animal Science, Regroupement Québécois Oiseaux Award – One-year subscription to Québec Oiseaux
- Resistance is Futile by Lia Loebenberg: Highest Distinction, Marianopolis College Science Award
- Slimy Intelligence by Niraj Dayanandan: Concordia University – Department of Biology Award, Gold Medal – Junior, Highest Distinction, Super expo-sciences Hydro Québec (SESHQ) Experimentation & Design Award
- Strike Zone by Stefan Robb and Jaden Green: Great Distinction, McGill University – Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering Award

Furthermore, congratulations to Niraj Dayanandan, who attended the Provincial Science Fair, or Super expo-sciences Hydro Québec, held in Gatineau, on April 16–19th.

The students not only presented their projects to various people, they also made new friends. "What made the experience so incredible were the people we met," says Charlotte Ouimet. "Everyone was so

incredible and their projects were innovative! It was truly an amazing and memorable experience and I am so grateful that Ashley and I were chosen to participate in the fair."

We must not forget to thank Ms. Dillon and Ms. Fogel, who spent a lot of time helping students prepare for this event, as well as the teachers and staff that supervised the event: Mrs. Liscio, Mrs. Gehr, Ms. Zuccaro, Mrs. Symianick, and Mrs. Montpetit. The event was a complete success. "We are very proud of all the students," says Ms Dillon. "They worked very hard and put a lot of effort into their projects."

Journey to Cuba

By Jonah Azoulay



During March Break, the Royal West Academy Honour Band had the privilege to visit Cuba for a musical and cultural exchange. The week-long trip was an unforgettable experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

The minute we set foot in Cuba, the difference in culture became immediately apparent. The cars were vintage and unique, the architecture was amazing, music was everywhere, and the people were all extremely kind and hospitable. One particular person stood out to us. Our tour guide, Maria-Rosa, was always there to teach us about her wonderful country, to help us understand Spanish and to make sure we were having an awesome time.

During our stay, we did a lot of sightseeing. We visited beautiful underground caves, we toured Havana, and we went on a really nice hike. During our experience, I felt like all the members of the Honour Band became much closer. By the end of the trip, it was almost like we were family.

I loved the musical aspect of Cuba. As a group, we went to see an a cappella band, we went to a jazz café, and we even learned how to do the salsa. When we got to play for the Cubans, I knew what a special experience we would have. At the two different musical schools and the community centre that we visited, we got to play some of our repertoire for Cuban students and citizens. Afterwards, they had the opportunity to share their culture with us. The talent that some of these



students possessed blew us away. After our performances, we got to socialize. Even though there was a language barrier between us, I can firmly say that we came home with some new friends.

The Honour Band's trip to Cuba has become one of the best experiences of my life. It was filled with discovery, music, and most importantly, friendship. A huge thank you to all the chaperones and Ms. Purdy. Thank you for this wonderful journey. I will never forget it!

Public Speaking Competition

By Mrs. Erika Kuch, English Language Arts

Congratulations everyone!

All students who attend Royal West Academy participate in an annual public speaking program through their English Language Arts classes. The

process begins in the classroom, where teachers prepare students by helping them practice their oratory skills. They learn the importance of enunciation, that public speaking is not as scary as it may seem, and how to keep an audience engaged in what they are saying by using their voices and words.

The Secondary I and II students worked on their storytelling skills by writing and delivering a three-minute personal narrative to an audience of their fellow classmates. We have all learned a lot about each other over the past few weeks!

The Secondary III, IV, and V classes all wrote and delivered persuasive speeches on relevant social or global topics. Speeches ranged from serious to humorous, from inspirational to philosophical. Some of this year's topics included: morality in the media, questioning the benefits of optimism, the politics of fear, how body checking in hockey should be banned, the de-stigmatization of mental illness, how success is



killing the West, and religion in modern society. These speeches not only were entertaining but opened our minds on a wide range of issues.

One student from each English class was selected to compete in our in-school competition that was held on April 2. All of the candidates were well-prepared and delivered speeches of a high calibre. From this process, one student from each grade level was selected to represent Royal West Academy at the English Montreal School Board competition held on April 17.

Congratulations to the following students who competed in the EMSB Public Speaking competition:

- Liam Baum (Secondary I)
- Gabriel Isabella (Secondary II)
- Madison Mclauchlin (Secondary III): Gold
- Logan Stack (Secondary IV): Bronze
- Chloe Karam (Secondary V): Bronze

We are very proud of you!

OSS Club Ski Trip

By Oliver Jean & Bruce Say



Despite the snowstorms of these past few months, several families and friends, including myself, recently drove to a mountain to ski.

Secondary II and Secondary IV students had the opportunity to go on the ski trip this year, but not all students went. Although there were not enough students interested in the Secondary IV ski trip, Mr. Zigby, Ms. Colannino, and Ms. Leech-Pepin were nice enough to let them join the OSS Club ski trip. The trip took place on March 27–29. We went to Mont-Sainte-Anne, a mountain in Quebec.

We first arrived the morning of the March 27, where we quickly dropped off our luggage and got ready for a full day of skiing. Although it was late in the season, the skiing was fantastic. This winter was very cold, leaving a lot of snow and a perfect temperature for spring skiing. There were a few snow parks open, so we had a lot of fun trying new tricks. Come lunch time, we were able to eat at picnic tables outside without our jackets.

Later that evening, we all went for a short trip to Quebec City. We were dropped off by the port, and

immediately started walking with no sure destination. Although it seemed as if all of us had split apart, many of us had the same idea, and met in a small patisserie called “Queues de Castor”. We enjoyed our hot Beaver Tails and then headed back to the condos.



The next day we were able to ski for even longer since we were already at the hill. It was slightly chillier than the first day, yet some students still skied in sweaters or thin jackets. Even when the skiing was done, our day had much more life in it. We spent the evening at a sugar shack, where we enjoyed a delicious meal while listening to some live folk music. Before long, many Royal West Academy students sat beside the musicians and played the spoons. But it wouldn't be a party without dancing, and along came the dancing. We moved tables and chairs to form a circle where the students danced with strangers, friends, and acquaintances, while still enjoying themselves. We were given a little tour and background of the sugar shack, and enjoyed some maple syrup taffy before heading back to the condo, thinking it was the end to our exhilarating trip, but it wasn't over yet. Once we got to our condos, we gathered outside to have a game of Canadian street hockey. We all had our fun of dancing, hockey, and competitiveness, before we hit the sack.

We then packed up our things and left Sunday morning.

We are extremely grateful to the teachers willing to bring almost 30 more kids with them on this amazing trip.



Nothing to Lose! Musical: A Primer

By Matthew Xanthoudakis

Douglas Floen's newest musical, *Nothing to Lose!*, is a story loosely based on William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that leaves you in stitches.

The story takes place in an old rundown theatre called The Palace that, in its prime, saw some of the greatest shows on earth. The Palace is home to an old washed up actor by the name of Theo Thespy.

The play begins when "Dave's Dancing Dollies", a song-and-dance group, take up refuge in the theatre, followed by a young entrepreneur, Emma, who is interested in buying The Palace and restoring it to its former glory. Hilarity ensues as this group is joined by a pair of misfit thieves, a bubbly young couple, and an old magician set on brewing a potent love potion. With musical selection and direction by Chris Barillaro, *Nothing to Lose!* is packed with song, dance, and witty puns that everyone enjoyed.

Nothing to Lose! Musical

By Madame Arkadina (aka Willa Bateman)

[A cast members reflection on the experience of being a part of an RWA musical](#)

I am the Madam Arkadina, Mistress of Magic. I can conjure, I can levitate! I can perform acts of inspiration that will leave you gasping! And so can the rest of the musical cast!

The week of April 13, a group of students at Royal West Academy put on another of their annual musicals. This year, we performed an original piece entitled *Nothing to Lose!* written by our director Douglas Floen. Chris Barillaro did the musical direction, and Alexia Gourd and Ms. Segal (*Big Spender*) choreographed the dance numbers. The show was a huge success with many fantastic song and dance numbers, witty dialogue, and crazy chase scenes. A great time was had by both audience members and cast members alike—if I do say so myself!

I joined the musical three years ago, and every day since has been an extremely positive experience for me. Before I joined, I distinctly remember expecting a group of highly sensitive and competitive artist-types, but I did not get what I was expecting. What I experienced was a

group of friends working together and doing something we all love.

At the beginning of the year, the entire cast rehearses once a week after school to learn the group songs with Chris, and then weekly dance rehearsals later. As the year progresses, the number of rehearsal hours greatly increases. The cast members begin to have at least three days after school of rehearsals, and even come to school on weekends. Every one of the students in this program is extremely devoted and cherishes every minute we spend practicing together. Another aspect that I immensely enjoyed about this group of individuals is our sense of family. Though each of us all have our own distinct personalities, we have all grown to extreme closeness drawn together by our love of performing.

Even though the musical has basically taken over my life with its long rehearsal hours and intense training, it has easily been one of the best experiences of my life. It has given me far more than it has taken (and what it has taken, I haven't missed). It has given me a bunch of awesome friends, a reason to get up each morning, and overall has made my high school experience a million times better. I have fallen in love with musical theatre and all the people who work hard each year to make it a success.

Any budding singers/dancers/actors out there who are interested in musical theatre? Join us because you've got nothing to lose!

Why We Should Sell Raffle Tickets

By Vanessa Travisano

Each student at Royal West Academy has been given four raffle tickets to sell. The proceeds collected will go towards our auditorium in order to install an air-conditioning system. If each student raises \$160 by selling four tickets each at \$40, we will reach our goal of \$140,000. The problem we face is that many students decided, for reasons of their own, to leave their tickets in homeroom or throw them away.

In order to improve the environment of our school, each student needs to participate in this simple and beneficial fundraiser. We have the support from the RWA Foundation, of which a member, Emilio Travisano,

has stated, "It is a very simple task to do and it can be accomplished by every student at the school if each student puts some effort."

By buying the ticket, you have the chance to win one of eight amazing prizes. For all those Montreal Canadiens or Habs fans out there, the first five prizes are hockey tickets in the best section of the Bell Centre: the Desjardins section. There you get unlimited free food and amazing seats to watch your favourite hockey team play an exciting game of hockey. The first prize is a pair of hockey tickets to fifteen games, second prize is a pair of tickets to ten games, third prize is a pair of tickets to seven games, and fourth and fifth prizes are each a pair of tickets to five games. Even if you are not a hockey fan, you can resell the tickets and profit more than a thousand dollars, since a pair of tickets is worth \$378.

There are three additional prizes that you can win when you purchase a ticket. These consist of a 52-inch Sony HD television worth \$1000, two Giant Simple Single bicycles worth \$399 each, and two 3-day passes to watch the exhilarating *Osheaga* indie-rock festival worth \$500. By buying a \$40 ticket, you are entered to win one of these expensive prizes.



Lastly, each student that sells their four tickets is entered to win a pair of tickets to see the British pop boy band, One Direction, on September 5, 2015. A pair of One Direction tickets is worth at least \$300 and you only need to sell four raffle tickets to have a chance to win. If you sell double the amount of tickets asked, you double the chances of winning this prize.

It is simple to sell four tickets since you can buy a ticket yourself, or ask family members, neighbours, and friends; it takes you only ten minutes to do! The deadline to sell four tickets is June 8, 2015. Royal West

Academy is asking each student to make an effort in order to have a better environment for their students. Therefore, each student should participate to help RWA reach their goal of \$140,000.

Super Smash Bros. Video Game Club

By Michael Côté



There has been a rising public interest in video games ever since they were first invented. Now, we even have video games in our school.

About a month ago, the first ever Royal West Academy video game based club was created. Twice a week, students can go to this club at lunch time or after school to have fun and compete with each other in a video game from Nintendo's *Super Smash Bros.* series. Players of all skill levels are welcome to the club. Students can even earn a cultural credit by coming to seven different sessions.

Super Smash Bros. is a fighting game that features a plethora of everybody's favourite video game characters. The most popular game choice is *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, which was made in 2001 by Nintendo for their GameCube console. This outstanding game has stood the test of time and still has a large fan base today.

As a participant, I can say that this club really helps make me look forward to the school day. From the moment I enter the school until the time for the club meet, I can't wait to gather in room 312 and play my favourite game with other people who share the same passion. Throughout the day my friends and I argue with each other about who's going to beat whom and get ourselves excited for the next session. Some members of the group have gotten so excited over this game that they have wagered on a best-of-three match.

The best part about this club is that it also helps the students make friends. Students from all grades are able to meet people with common interests who would have otherwise not have had the chance to meet. I myself have already made a friend or two.

This club just began in room 312, hosted by Mrs. Gehr, and has at least 15 consistent players. The club started

with just one game set up, but now has two or three every session, depending on who is coming. The club has plans to stay for the rest of the year and to continue next year.

Boys Badminton

By Jonathan Pesce



The boys badminton teams had an excellent season this year, in all three age groups. They finished first in Midget and Juvenile, and fell a little short in Bantam, getting second place. In the end, the coach, Mr. Dufault, said that he was happy with the results, especially because most of their Midget players played in Juvenile.

The Bantam team, which was composed of Secondary I and Secondary II students, had an excellent season this year. They managed to get second place, because they had to forfeit a game for not having enough players. Even though they didn't get first place, they were still considered the best in their division, winning all their games (but the one they forfeited). Their final record by the end of the season was 5-0-1.

The Midget team was composed of many players from Secondary III and Secondary IV. This amazing roster went 5-0-1, tying their only game to Howard S. Billings Regional High School. For most of the wins that they had, they won them in a pretty dominating fashion. They ended up finishing first in their division, which let them qualify for team championships in April.



The Juvenile team had four out of the six players that should have been in Midget. Even though this team was young, they still managed to do extremely well,

enough to qualify for championships. They finished first in their division with a record of 4–0–1.

If you are in Secondary I to Secondary IV and want to join the badminton team next year, signups will be around January next year. Mr. Dufault is looking for students who are dedicated to playing and improving during the whole season. He is also looking for players who are willing to give it their all and most importantly, players that want to have fun.

Midget Boys Volleyball

By Adamo Barbier



The Royal West Academy Midget Boys Volleyball team has evolved significantly over the past recent years. This team is comprised of young teenagers ranging from Secondary II to Secondary IV. The core of the team is made up of our veteran players, including power hitters Jaad Van Der Wee and Jesse Li, setters Adamo Barbier and Aris Zimakas, middles Karl Hunger and Michael Hamilton, and liberal Erikson Moore. Over time the team has grown and recruited opposites Owen Miller and Ryan Arndtsen, middles Arthur Ayestas Hilgert and Cameron Wilson, and power hitters Abhinav Pal, Yi Sen Wang, and Matteo Zappone, who have greatly impacted and helped the team's success.



With hard work and dedication, the Midget Boys Volleyball team has been able to improve greatly. Physics teacher and volleyball enthusiast, Mr. Zigby,

coaches all of RWA's boys volleyball teams. Not only has he been able to teach the midget boys the skills and strategies necessary to play a good game of volleyball, but he has also led them to become more disciplined and diligent teenagers.

During the past season, Mr. Zigby led the team to become undefeated, a feat that has never happened in RWA midget boys history. The success of the team not only depended on his coaching, but also the determination and hard-working traits of the team. The team has had countless practices, both before and after school. Even when many members of the team live more than an hour away from school, they still showed up at 7 AM in the morning for practice. These practices have allowed the team to improve their skills but have also created a special relationship between the team members and their coach. Many of the drills include making the whole team do push-ups or suicides if one team member does not try hard enough. As a result, it has pulled the team to work together to achieve a goal instead of doing it on an individual basis.

When the Midget Boys Volleyball team was first formed last year, most of the team members had never played the sport competitively. The only experience they had playing volleyball was in gym class. But they started to learn new techniques such as overhand serves and important positions when playing. Over the course of two years, they have drastically improved their skill sets and now laugh at themselves when remembering how they played when they first started.

The midget boys' team, being undefeated, earned the first seed of the GMAA playoffs. Their first game was against Laurier Macdonald High School which they won decisively with a set of 2–0. Unfortunately, when it came to the finals, the RWA team did not play to their full potential and lost to a crushing defeat of 2–1 in overtime while playing the neighbouring Loyola High School. It was a disappointing loss as power hitter Jesse Li stated, "We should have won. We were just too nervous playing in front of a large crowd for the first time. We made silly mistakes that we usually don't make." In the end, the team had to settle for the silver medal. Although they did not win against Loyola, the RWA Midget Boys Volleyball team will be representing the GMAA in the upcoming provincial tournament in

spring of next year. The team will continue to practice to prepare for the tournament in spring. The RWA Midget Boys Volleyball team will continue to train and play together as a team until they graduate from this school.

The Governing Board Report

By Mr. Kirk Kelly, Chair, Governing Board

This report covers our last two meetings.

Looking back at the **March 11 meeting**, here are the highlights.

The Budget Building Process was completed and our five budget priorities were sent to the EMSB for consideration in their preparation of board-wide budget priorities.

To recap the process for those who aren't memorizing each month's governing board report: every year the Ministry sets goals for the province's school networks, touching on things like academic achievement, retention, safety and security, professional development, etc. Each school board in turn consults with its schools to determine the best ways for that school board to achieve those goals, given the material and budget constraints in effect.

In the not too distant past or certainly within living memory, schools were asked what it was that the Board should do with additional resources: more librarians, more books, fix buildings, etc. For the last few years, schools were being asked instead what it is that they are currently doing that they do not want to see cut. There, in just two sentences, is a working definition of austerity. Each school is limited to five choices. The Board assumes that you might, grudgingly, accept cuts to whatever activities you don't put on your list.

At Royal West Academy, we focused on support services to students, facilities, and professional development, particularly around the implementation of technologies in the classroom and their integration with pedagogy.

Our list of things not to cut (and even, perhaps, to increase):

- Frontline Support Services: guidance counsellors, addiction counsellors, secretaries, and resource teachers;
- On-site IT technical support and maintenance to ensure the effective functioning of existing hardware and software infrastructure; and for a student-parent-teacher portal;
- Support for Facilities: Performing Arts Centre, building, and grounds;
- Devolve professional development budgets to RWA to ensure training is appropriate to our special programs and the needs of our teachers; and
- Continue to maintain per-capita allocation.

We'll see how our list influences the list from the whole Board.

The portal subcommittee was busy prior to the March meeting, planning demonstrations of three possible portal solutions for mid-March. The idea was to invite a few representatives from the key stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, students) to critically review and comment on three solutions: Edmodo, Schoology, and Coda. More news below in the April meeting notes.

Our commissioner for Ward 2, Joe Lalla, brought good news on building upgrades for Royal West Academy. We are one of 17 schools undergoing a complete energy systems upgrade. Work has already started on replacing our existing electrical panel and upgrading our fire alarm system. As well, all the lights in the school will be replaced with LED bulbs, greatly reducing our energy consumption and improving light levels in all parts of the school. Additional masonry repairs were also approved to continue the major work begun last year. Mr. Lalla also announced that RWA would receive a grant of \$22,000 to be used for technology in the school as part of a board-wide program.

School trips came up for discussion. A combined Secondary IV and V ski trip to Mont-Sainte-Anne temporarily replaced this year's Secondary IV ski trip, cancelled due to lack of student interest. While the replacement trip was a great success by all accounts, it did call the plan for Secondary IV ski trips for future years into question.

For next year, a proposal that the Secondary IV students spend three days in Boston as their grade level trip was approved. Based on that experience, Boston may become the ongoing standard trip for Secondary IV.

The Board approved an allocation of \$5000 to be used for volunteer appreciation gifts for all the people who help make our ECA program a great success. Traditionally, the gifts are an item of clothing with the RWA name and logo.

We also received a brief update on the status of collective bargaining between the teachers and the government from a teacher involved in the planning. The essential message was that, while we may see visible signs of the collective displeasure of the teachers' union with the government's current proposals such as stickers, posters, or T-shirts with messages, no work stoppages are planned this academic year.

The **April 8 meeting** started off with an interesting review by the portal subcommittee of the preliminary findings from the March 18 demonstration of the three portal solutions under consideration. Participants in the review filled out evaluations, and the subcommittee is now processing the feedback and will deliver a final report at the May 25 meeting with their recommendation of a portal solution for the school.

Meanwhile, the EMSB has also moved ahead with its planning for a board-wide portal and, given the progress that has been made at RWA, asked if the school would send at least two parent representatives to join their planning committee. Michael Delis and Ryan Ortiz, members of both Governing Board and the portal subcommittee, agreed to represent RWA.

Back in March, we received a written explanation of how "modération" works on student's final marks in a course when one of the evaluating components is a standardized Ministry exam. The Secondary IV math exam is an example of the many courses where this happens.

The drive behind the policy of modération is to create a level playing field when it comes to evaluating students. We know that how easily students approach academic challenges can vary widely between different schools; Royal West Academy is a good example of a school

where students tend to have great facility with their studies. We also know that this is not true everywhere. Add to the fact that there are schools where teachers may grade easier and others where teachers hold students to tougher standards. So, the Ministry asks itself, is an 80% at one school the same as an 80% at another? Or is one of the 80s really an 85% and the other a 75%?

In a course with a mandatory Ministry exam, a student's final mark is a combination of how they did on the Ministry exam and what their final mark was for the year from their school. Modération tackles the problem of how to honestly evaluate the mark a student received at school so that their Ministry exam score plus their moderated school mark together form a fair basis for their final mark.

It's not that unusual. From my work with colleges and universities across the country, I know that many have a recalibrating system when it comes to evaluating student high school marks. If you graduated with 80% from XXX high school, they know that for them, it's really 70%. But an 80% from YYY high school is really 87%. What the Ministry's system does is take over this informal recalibrating system, formalize it with some pretty rigorous statistical analysis, apply it to everyone, and then make the results public to the post-secondary institutions trying to evaluate who best fits their programs.

The explanation is now posted for downloading on the RWA website under the heading of "Student Services."

While we were discussing moderated marks, we also found ourselves talking about how you go about calculating student averages. For the uninitiated, I should mention that RWA uses weighted averages. That means that the course mark and the number of periods that a course has each cycle are both taken into account in determining a student's average. We weren't far into the discussion before it became clear that there were any number of misconceptions about how to go about doing this. Some people even got quite emotional, an unusual state of affairs at governing board.

Well, if we were confused about how to calculate a weighted average, we thought there were likely others



in the same position. To clear up any misconceptions and to soothe all the ruffled feelings, the principal offered to prepare some easy-to-follow instructions and an example of how to calculate a student's average. These too can be found on the RWA website under the section on "Student Services."

The school's Code of Conduct was revised based on feedback from board members and teachers, resulting in few key changes. Electronic cigarettes were added to the smoking ban while smart watches were added to the list of electronic devices that cannot be used in the school unless approved by a teacher for a pedagogical purpose. Students in Secondary IV and V can now request Cultural Math as a replacement for the Science Math course. Finally, students are no longer required to wear school shoes to and from school.

An allocation of \$136 from the governing board's annual \$250 grant was made to help fund the Volunteer Reception at the school on June 4, 2015.

The topic of collaboration between teachers was discussed again. You may remember that RWA

students had achieved spectacular improvements in their results on the Secondary IV Ministry math exam from closer collaboration between the Secondary IV math teachers. Collaboration is a common strategy at RWA and there are many clear indications that it works. Our goal was initially to encourage more collaboration across all school subjects, especially those where it was less common. However, the topic is more complex than it seems at first, touching as it does on issues of teacher freedom, scheduling, personal teaching styles, etc. As an interim measure, we decided to create a minor case study looking at the collaboration effort between the Secondary IV teachers that would be available to the whole school community and might inspire teachers at RWA and other schools who currently are less keen or less experienced with collaboration to be more open to the idea.

Finally, the exam schedule was approved and has been posted (or will be shortly). As they say, always end on a positive note.

That's it.



Washington 2015 at the Embassy of Canada!



RWA USED UNIFORM SALE

Organized by RWA Home & School Association

Monday, June 8, 2015 @ 7 PM–8 PM

In the school cafeteria (cash or cheques only)

Donations of any (clean) RWA uniforms may be dropped off at the school office no later than Friday, June 5, 2015.



RWA NEW UNIFORM SALE

Organized by RWA Home & School Association

Tuesday, June 9, 2015 @ 2 PM–8 PM

Wednesday, June 10, 2015 @ 3 PM–8 PM

In the school cafeteria (cash or cheques only)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RWA UNIFORM SALES!

RWA Home & School is looking for volunteers to help out at the annual RWA uniform sales in the following capacities:

- June 8, 2015 @ 5:30–8 PM: move stock into cafeteria
- June 9, 2015 @ 1:30–8 PM: before, during, and after sale
- June 10, 2015 @ 2:30–9 PM: move boxes back into store and complete inventory

Please contact us at RWAHSA@gmail.com if you are interested—our volunteer in charge of scheduling will confirm a date and time with you!



LOST AND FOUND POLICY

Please be advised that the Lost and Found boxes are cleaned out on the 15th of each month. While labeled items are returned to their owners, several bags of unclaimed unlabeled items are removed and donated to charity every month. So if you are looking for lost items, make sure to look for them before the 15th!

The Lost and Found bins are located in three areas at Royal West Academy:

- outside the new gym
- outside the guidance office
- in the main office under the teachers' mailboxes

In the meantime, please label all your belongings!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr 28–May 2	Marine Biology trip
Apr 30–May 1	Book Fair
May 4	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
May 6–7	Spring Concert
May 12–15	Bardolators: A Midsummer Night's Dream
May 15	Free Dress Day
May 16–18	Bike Trip
May 18	Victoria Day
May 19	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
May 22	SLA Dance
May 25	Governing Board meeting @ 7 PM
May 27–29	Art vernissage

RWA



News

Editor

Ronald Pau (RWA parent)

Assistant Editor

Sophie Sun (Secondary V student)

Junior Assistant Editor

Yi Sen Wang (Secondary IV student)

Staff Advisor

Tony Pita (Principal)

RWA News is published during the academic year (from September to May) on the Royal West Academy website at www.royalwestacademy.com. Articles, comments, and suggestions may be directed to the editor at rwanews@gmail.com.





Centre communautaire
Tyndale St-Georges
Community Centre

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY

APR - 2 2015

Honourary Patrons

Dominic D'Alessandro
Oliver Jones

Chairman Emeritus

Tony Infillise

Board of Directors

Ron O'Connell
Chair

Susan Ajersch
Vice - Chair

Audrey Bector
Secretary

Samantha Welscheid
Treasurer

Petronella Beran
John Carr
Diane Ellison
Angela Estwick
Jennifer Gannon
Michael Hiles
Robert Johnson
Ian Kott
David McKenzie

Jen de Combe
Executive Director

**Fundraising
Committee**

John Carr
Chair

Susan McKinnon Bell
Director
Fund Development

David Boucher
Tim Carsley
Brian Drummond
Peter Dunn
Tony Infillise
Robert Johnson
Ian Kott
Michel Lavoie
Marcel Lebel
Reed Scowen
Sean Sirols
Jay Welsford

April 2015

Mr. Tony Pita, Principal
Royal West Academy
189 Easton Avenue
Montreal West, QC H4X 1L4

Dear Mr. Pita,

Throughout our Spring Newsletter 2015 you will hear uplifting stories of participants at Tyndale St-Georges achieving their dreams. As you read through the stories, know that you played a role in their success through your generous support.

Dreaming is not always an easy practice. For individuals who face challenges such as poverty or social exclusion dreaming can fall to the wayside while concerns for the everyday take over. At Tyndale St-Georges we support participants developing the skills and outlook necessary for dreams to take center stage!

We believe and see on a daily basis, the potential of our participants to thrive and reach new heights of achievement. Whether it be the first time mom taking care of her baby without the benefit of extended family, the child who worried he wouldn't pass his year or the adult who up until now couldn't see all she was capable of, we know that with the right support our participants can achieve their dreams. And that's what we are about! Tyndale St-Georges provide opportunities through life-long educational programming that is geared to not only building practical skills but the self-esteem and confidence necessary to take next steps.

We are very proud of what we and our participants have been able to achieve at Tyndale St-Georges. These accomplishments will change peoples' lives today and ripple outwards in the years to come. None of this would have been possible without your help. You make a difference in peoples' lives every day through your generous contributions.

Thank you for your support. I hope we can count on you again to help make someone's dreams come true.

Sincerely,

Jdc

Jen de Combe

*Many thanks for the wonderful & long
time support from the Royal West
community! Very grateful!*

Enregistrement/Registration: B/N 108146754 RR0002

870 Carré Richmond, Montréal, Québec H3J 1V7 Téléphone 514-931-6265 www.tyndalestgeorges.com