

RWA



News

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FEBRUARY 2020

A Word From The Administration

Ms. Angela Vaudry, Principal
Mr. Steven Manstavich, Vice-Principal
Ms. Christy Tannous, Vice-Principal
Ms. Candice Madden, Vice-Principal (interim)

Ski Trip

Heavy snowfall in January benefited our Secondary II students with fantastic ski conditions for their annual ski trip to Stoneham, QC. One hundred and fifty students attended the trip, which took place February 4–7. Students had a wonderful time skiing and tubing over the course of the four days. Due to the February 7 snowstorm, a decision was made to leave Stoneham earlier than originally planned. The early departure ensured a safe return for all students. Thank you to Mme C. Belina and all the teacher chaperones for their commitment to this wonderful experience.

Voyage à New York

Les élèves de secondaire V étaient également en voyage du 4 au 7 février, à New York, NY. Cent cinquante-cinq étudiants ont été charmés par la Grosse Pomme à travers le théâtre musical, les sports professionnels, les musées ainsi que d'autres sites uniques à cette ville qui fait rêver petits et grands. À cause de la tempête de neige du 7 février, la décision a été prise de quitter New York plus tôt que prévu. Le départ anticipé a assuré un retour sécuritaire pour tous les élèves. Nous tenons à remercier M. R. Aiken pour l'organisation du voyage, ainsi que tous les membres du personnel accompagnateur pour avoir aidé à rendre cette expérience inoubliable pour nos finissants.

Boston

A reminder to all Secondary IV parents that the Boston trip will not be taking place this year. Therefore students will be expected to attend classes as per usual during the week of March 31–April 3, 2020.

Semaine de reconnaissance du personnel

La semaine de reconnaissance du personnel (Staff Appreciation Week) a eu lieu du 17 au 21 février. Un grand merci à la Royal West Academy Home & School Association pour tous leurs efforts. Au courant de la semaine, nous avons eu droit à des déjeuners dignes de la royauté ainsi qu'à des mets succulents. Nous tenons à remercier Mmes Heidi Rackover et Shawna Brook qui ont coordonné l'événement. Les enseignants et le personnel ont été très touchés par leurs efforts et se sont sentis très appréciés. Mille fois merci!!

Salon des inventions

The annual Salon des inventions took place February 12. Secondary I students presented their inventions to their Royal West Academy peers. There were approximately 70 inventions, some certain to go on to be big moneymakers in the future. Congratulations to all the students who participated and a big THANK YOU to our Secondary I science teachers and prefects for their help with the event.

Expo-sciences

Près de 400 élèves en secondaire II à V ont participé à la 31e foire annuelle Expo-sciences (Science Fair), tenue le 13 février. Cette année encore, tous les projets ont été exposés dans le Foundation Gym, et jugés par près de 150 bénévoles du monde universitaire et professionnel. Comme à l'habitude, les projets étaient fantastiques et le calibre de recherche scientifique démontré par nos étudiants était impressionnant. Nous remercions tout particulièrement Mme J. Pevec, coordinatrice de l'événement, ainsi que Mmes A. Dillon et J. Fogel, enseignantes en sciences. Merci également à toutes les techniciennes de laboratoire et professeurs de sciences qui ont conseillé les étudiants lors des activités préparatoires. Finalement, nous tenons aussi à remercier le Home & School Association pour avoir offert le déjeuner ainsi que le dîner à tous les juges et bénévoles.



End of year exams

Now that Term 3 has begun, many of us have started thinking about year-end exams. Please note that these exams begin in May 2020. Parents are asked to avoid scheduling appointments or summer vacations until they are certain that their child will not need to attend summer school (July 2020) or write supplemental exams (July–August 2020; exact dates TBD). Additionally, parents should note that Term 3 is weighted at 60% of the final grade. Given the lengthy duration of this term (3½ months), if your child is experiencing difficulties, we encourage you to communicate regularly with their teachers. Email is the most efficient way of reaching teaching staff—email addresses can be found on the RWA website at www.royalwestacademy.com.

Tempête de neige et journées pédagogiques

Notez qu'en raison de la fermeture de toutes les écoles de la EMSB le 7 février, la journée pédagogique provisoire prévue le 5 juin 2020 sera désormais une journée d'école régulière pour compenser. Tel que publié dans le calendrier, le 5 juin sera un jour 5.

De plus, une erreur s'est glissée dans l'agenda des élèves. Il y est indiqué que le 30 mars 2020 est une journée pédagogique (Sector Ped day), et le 3 avril 2020 est une journée régulière. La situation a en fait été inversée. Le 30 mars est une journée régulière d'école, et ce sera un jour 2, tandis que la journée pédagogique sera le 3 avril.

Change at RWA

We would like to welcome Mme A. Gouin to our school. Mme Gouin was previously a teacher at RWA before leaving to pursue other endeavors. Mme Gouin will remain with us until the end of the 2019–2020 academic year. She replaces Mr. Mouafo.

Rencontre de parents et bulletins

La rencontre de parents (Parent-Teacher interviews) aura lieu le 12 mars 2020. Les parents sont invités à rencontrer les enseignants en après-midi, de 15h15 à 17h30 et en soirée, de 19h à 21h30. Les bulletins seront distribués le 10 mars 2020.

March Break

Finally, Royal West Academy wishes to welcome back the students who spent their March break in Spain and Portugal on the Art Trip, and to everyone who travelled over the March Break (March 2–6). We hope you all brought back stories and memories to share, and are

rested and recharged for the home stretch that is the third term.

SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

By Mr. Mitchell White, RWA Foundation
President

I am thrilled to report that plans for our new Performing Arts Centre are underway. As we reported last month, we received confirmation that the EMSB has allocated \$900K to Royal West Academy towards our new performing arts venue—with a potential additional \$550K from the provincial government—a project we've been raising funds for more than ten years. With this money, our project is going to happen for real.

That money, combined with the \$500K that the Foundation has raised through the generosity of the parents and school community over the years, brings us closer than ever before to making this new performing arts venue a reality.

In fact, of the \$2.2 million dollars originally budgeted in 2012 for this project, and factoring in the cost-of-living increases since then, we only need to raise another \$400K–\$500K together, as a community, to break ground next year and have the new performing arts centre in place by the fall of 2021. That means that if your child is in Secondary III or younger, you can help by making a donation now, and your child will directly benefit from this new state-of-the-art venue for the rest of their time at RWA. If your child is in Secondary IV or graduating, you'll be leaving an amazing legacy for the school's future students, just like the parents who were here 15 years ago did when they raised money for the new gym our kids enjoy today.

We are so close! But we need your support to colour in the thermometer and close this campaign. So please donate whatever you can—and keep in mind that all your donations are 100% tax-deductible, which really helps reduce your tax bill.

In the meantime, please mark your calendars for two upcoming events at the school that feature our amazing RWA performing arts talent:



- Dance Show on March 20, 2020 at 6 and 9 PM
- Dessert Concert, March 27, 2020 at 7 PM

Imagine attending these annual performing arts showcases in a state-of-the-art auditorium with comfortable seating, great acoustics, the best sound and lighting systems, and a ventilation system that allows for air conditioning in hot weather and heat in the cold. Let's come together to make it happen for our incredible students!

If you'd like to help out with this fundraising campaign or learn more about the project, I invite you to join us for our next meeting, to be held on March 16, 2020, at 7 PM in the staff room. Access is via the Ainslie Rd entrance. If you would like to help but can't make the meeting, just send me an email at info@rwaf.ca.

This dream is so close to being real. Please help us make it so!

India Exchange Program

By Sydney Levitt

A life changing experience

I'm sitting here on February 7, the exact day I left for India a year ago. It's crazy how quickly time flies and



just how much my outlook on life has changed since the adventure began.

It was my first time travelling overseas and I could not have been more excited. After two long plane rides, we finally landed in New Delhi and were reconnected with our billets (Indian students who visited us in Canada) and their families. It was three in the morning and I kid you not, I have never in my life seen people that energetic at that time of day.

It took us two hours to get back to their house. If you thought traffic in Montreal was bad, you have never seen the streets of New Delhi. Once again, this wasn't even the middle of the day, it was three in the morning. Three! There were camels to my left, elephants to the right, and people standing on the hoods of their cars screaming at each other. Being a Montrealer, it felt like absolute mayhem.

Finally, we arrived at their house. I was greeted by forty people standing in the living room of a small apartment. It was now 5 AM. They cooked me food, danced with me, hugged me, and gave me presents—and they didn't even know me! It was truly fascinating just how welcoming the people in India were.





Everything began to calm down. As I was ready to shower after many hours of travel, I made a realization that has never made me more appreciative of the facilities we have here: bucket showers. To clean yourself, you're given a cup and a bin filled with water. Not my favourite part of the trip but definitely an eye-opening one.

Over the course of my time in New Delhi, I experienced some pretty cool things. I got henna done at 1 AM in an alley by a random guy on a motorcycle. My partner Priyanshi acted as though it was completely normal but from my point of view, it was quite unusual. My lovely hosts also made me my own sari which was absolutely stunning. I got to go to an Indian wedding and it was nothing less than spectacular. Between the thousands of people there, the flowers covering the entirety of the room, and the bride and groom entering on horses, I was stunned. We visited the Taj Mahal, went to markets, saw a Bollywood theatre production, and



much more. As well, I was treated like a celebrity. People would ask me left and right for my autograph or a picture. We're used to a multicultural society living in a country like Canada, but in India they're not.

Sadly, our week with the families came to an end. We said our goodbyes and continued our adventure to Jaipur, Jodhpur, Ranthambhore, Khimsar, and Mumbai. We went to the Gandhi museum, rode elephants and camels, spent a night in the desert, went on a safari Jeep tour, fed monkeys, visited temples and landmarks, hiked, relaxed, and made the most incredible memories altogether.

The 24 other students I travelled with I now consider my family. I have never gotten closer with a group of individuals that quickly and I am so thankful for this opportunity. The chaperones—Mr. A. Diacoumacos, Ms. C. Belina, Mr. C. Northey, Alexa, and our travel agent Ron—were amazing. All the hard work they put into planning the trip was much appreciated. The three years of fundraising and hard work invested in the Exchange Program were absolutely worth it.

I was paired up with the sweetest, most kind-hearted partner and made lifelong friends that live halfway across the world. The hospitality and openness of the families I stayed with made my experience that much better. As well, they made me a lot more comfortable in a new environment that's entirely different from North America.

For any younger or future Royal West Academy students, I highly recommend this program. It is wonderful and is the chance of a lifetime.

Review: *Hello, Dolly!*

By Sophie Oberfeld

A huge success!

Royal West Academy presented the well-known, Tony Award winning musical *Hello, Dolly!* created by Michael Stewart and Jerry Herman, on December 16–19. This marvelous production was directed by Douglas Floen and Chris Barillaro (musical director). *Hello, Dolly!* tells the story of a colourful and dynamic woman who is busy with her many jobs, including that of matchmaker. Dolly has decided that instead of matching her client, Mr. Vandergelder, the “half-a-millionaire” of Yonkers NY, with another woman, she will match him with herself by getting him to fall in love with her.



This show was outstanding because of the wonderful actors. Many of the main characters were double-cast; I was at the show on December 19 and thus will be commenting on the performers that I saw on that evening. Megan Edelstein, who played the lead, Dolly Levi, was amazing. Every word she said felt like it was really coming from Dolly and not Megan acting as Dolly. She articulated so well that all audience members could understand every word she was saying. The passion in her singing was great and really enriched her songs.

Alyssa Mirarchi, who played Irene Molloy, was one of the strongest singers in the cast. Also, her emotions were spot on when Cornelius sang her a song about love, and they kissed. Her relationship with him in the show seemed so real! Sofia Iarocci, who played Minnie, did great gestures and was very loud and clear.

Max Taffert was extremely likeable in his role as Cornelius, and he shared great stage chemistry with Trent Deschamps-Coinner, who played Barnaby. As the wealthy Horace Vandergelder, Joseph Oberfeld was suitably grumpy and charming at the same time.

All of the other performers played their parts well and



added depth to the overall production. The supporting cast, amazing as townspeople and dancing waiters, greatly enhanced the quality of the production.

This musical would not have achieved such success without its magnificent directing. The choice of play was just wonderful for a high school production. The casting was spot on—everyone suited their characters perfectly! The seven-piece band added so much to the songs, with instruments including a keyboard, a flute (and other wind instruments), a trumpet, a violin, a trombone, drums, and a bass. The sound was fantastic!

The choreographer, Jenny Rizzo, created super original dance moves that showcased the talents of the performers very well. In the song *I Put My Hand In* the best dancers in the cast rocked a fabulous dance that stunned and awed the audience. In another song, called *Waiters' Gallop*, a waiter even did a flip! The show also had the pleasure of having RWA graduate and past musical performer, Clara Chemtov, choreograph dance numbers for *Motherhood March* and *Elegance*.

The set design was a big part of the production. It was simple but successful in conveying a sense of place. Even though there were only a few pieces, it set the right mood for the play. It was very well constructed and put together.

What was also good about the piece was how true the costumes were to the time period and how the makeup was subtle but effective. Dolly's red dress, plus the waiters' coordinated costumes, resulted in an especially successful restaurant scene.

The audience was attentive and interested, and definitely appreciated the production. This play was an amazing high school version of *Hello, Dolly!* filled with extraordinary dances, fabulous singing, and very believable acting—tied together with great directing. It was a must-see for people of all ages who like a wonderful storyline filled with comedy and romance. If you were unlucky enough to have missed the show, you can check out a recording of the Tuesday night performance at <https://youtu.be/4yhPT39fNoM>.

Variety Show

By Zoë Small

A Glance Backstage

As usual, Royal West Academy's annual Variety Show was a huge success. From singing to dancing to solving triangular Rubik's cubes, the acts were as diverse as





they were outstanding. Planning the show was in itself an experience to be remembered, littered with ups and downs but definitely worth the hard work.

The first step to planning the show was tryouts. In the beginning, all of the organizers were tasked with deciding who would be in the show and who would be declined the opportunity to participate. However, after watching everyone perform for the first time and realizing the high caliber of all of the performers, our empathy got the best of us and we decided that everyone who tried out would participate. This was not an issue, because each and every act that tried out was absolutely worthy of their stage time.

We then had to decide the order of the acts and run rehearsals. We spent time, with the help of the lights and sound committee, making sure every act ran smoothly. With showtime rapidly approaching, it was important that there were minimal bumps in the road.

Finally, the day of the show had arrived. Performers could be seen doing final rehearsals, putting on costumes and makeup, and folding pamphlets for the audience. As the audience started filling in, a sense of nervousness and excitement filled the backstage area. Everyone had worked so hard to perfect their performances and it was finally time to see the fruit of their labours.

The show went beautifully and everyone was overjoyed. The spectacle the co-organizers and I had planned for weeks turned out exactly how we hoped it would, and there isn't a thing I would have changed.

Big Sibling Program

By David Pivetta

Nearly every Thursday for the past four months, lunch in Room 306 has been a tremendous source of well-deserved fun and laughter for students part of the Big Sibling Program. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end and this is one of them ... until next year! I wanted to use my designated space in the Royal West Academy newsletter to share, from a third person's perspective, how much fun this extra-curricular activity is!

Jasmine Puterman-Salzman, the head of The Big Sibling Program started this club in an effort to help new Secondary I students have an easier transition in their jump from elementary to high school. "Unlike other provinces with middle school, we are forced into a big high school with much older kids and it can be very intimidating," explains Jasmine. "I wanted to start a club that would get rid of the age gap between grades and bring us all together as a community."

This year, the program had a total of 30 students: 13 Secondary I and II (younger siblings) and 17 Secondary IV and V (older siblings). Every Thursday at lunch, they would all meet up in Room 306, have lunch with their "sibling" and play all kinds of bonding activities. Activities varied from *21 Questions* and *Headbantz* to *Guess the Tune and Artist* and my personal favourite, *The Skittles Game*. In the skittles game, the player must draw a skittle from a bag, and correctly answer a question that corresponds to the colour of the skittle—but more importantly, you get to eat it!



When asking Evelyn Newton, a Secondary II student, how she likes this ECA, she responded: "I think it's so chill, I've met so many new people and always have a good time with them!"

Concluding another successful year, Jasmine looks to get more attention to this great program by working on ways to incorporate some out-of-school activities as well.

Swim Team Success

By Dimitri Dages



The Royal West Academy swim team, prided on their inclusivity and acceptance of all swimmers regardless of their level, has so far had a very successful swim season as almost all of the swimmers and many of the coaches, on their first attempt, have qualified for the finals. In an interview with Marsia Da Chao, one of three head coaches, she explains what makes this team such a success.

When asking why the team's results were so impressive this year Marsia responded by saying, "Many of these swimmers are very well trained winter swimmers who swim outside of the school team, and others have been trained by student coaches, so they all get some training before the competitions which increases their likelihood of succeeding."

She also attributed much of the team's success to the weekly hour-long practices that took place with several experienced coaches. These coaches were there to help improve not only the speed of the swimmers but also their techniques. "The motivation and talent of our swimmers and some of the help provided by both our practices and the group of coaches we have, has made our team's success possible," explained Marsia.

There was a lot of preparation and organization needed for a smooth running and efficient practice. At each practice there were five lanes available with a group of two coaches per lane. Each group of coaches were responsible for creating a plan for the practice focusing on the specific issues of their assigned swimmers.

Mrs. L. Kissin, the supervising teacher of this extra curricular group, had cancelled two out of the four swim meets organized due to the great amount of swimmers who had already qualified for finals during the first two swim meets. With this team's motivation, drive, and skill, there is great chance of future winnings.

Juvenile Boys Soccer

By Joseph Santucci



A Disappointing Season

These past eleven years have not been easy for Royal West Academy's juvenile boys soccer coach Ms. C. Belina. For ten years straight, she achieved close to greatness with her juvenile boys, consecutively receiving silver medals, but failed to receive the gold. It was only until last year that a close and special group of talented guys out-performed John Rennie High School in the finals to bring home the banner. Her joy was through the roof, "We finally broke my curse!" yelled the coach, jumping up and down. As with any other great coaches, Ms. Belina stated that she was going into the season to win it all and her mentality was set on winning ten gold medals instead of ten silver ones once again.

The team was led by amazing, skillful players like Bryan Di Domenico, Josh Onichino, and Perry Nikoletos.

Although the team was led by a strong defence, the team had trouble finding the back of the net multiple times throughout the season. Ms. Belina and the team walked through the season with a 3-2-1(win-loss-tie) record, playing teams like Kuper Academy, Westwood High School, and LaurenHill Academy, and snagged a spot in the semifinals versus Lester B. Pearson High School, an unfamiliar opponent. Playing a team from the east end like LBPHS was uncommon for RWA students, but definitely a game to look forward to. It was an unfortunate 3-0 loss to a great team, as the juvenile team was beaten in every aspect of the game.

After asking Ms. Belina her final thoughts on the year the team had, she simply said, "The chemistry between the players was nothing like last year's, even though I believe that this year's team was better overall, there was no one to look up to in times of desperation like there was last year."

The Governing Board Report

By Ms. Jacqueline Stein-Elman, Vice Chair

Royal West Academy's most recent Governing Board meeting was held on February 24. The meeting commenced with special guests Marlene Jennings, trustee to the EMSB, and Ann Marie Matheson, director general of the EMSB.

Ms. Jennings provided the Governing Board with an overview of her mandate—essentially to put in

governance and practices for proper management and accountability, with decision-making powers at the appropriate levels, so that the EMSB can operate more efficiently. The mandate runs for six months, ending on May 6, 2020, with the possibility of an additional six-month extension. For RWA, Ms. Jennings has begun discussions with the deputy minister on how we can make a new request for funding for auditorium renovations. She is suggesting a different formula for evaluation that will hopefully prove successful in receiving the requested funds this time.

Business arising from our last meeting included clarification of the exemption process for the sexual education program. Namely, there is a form in the documents sent to parents that needs to be completed and then sent to the EMSB for approval. No child can be exempt from the entire program. For more information, please refer back to the email sent by the Administration.

Under new business, we had a parent present her concerns regarding the Cell Phone Policy. She requested that it be revised when we review the school's entire Code of Conduct in April 2020. We discussed the policy only in its current state and not how it is being applied. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made and passed to create a subcommittee to research and make recommendations for an update to the policy.

Other highlights from the meeting:

- **Principal's Report:**
 - Supplemental exams are being moved to December (from January)
 - Issue with retaining French teachers
- **Parent Delegate's Report:**
 - Advocating for more transparency from EMSB meetings—requested that they be recorded by webcast and then broadcasted for public viewing
 - Parent conference is planned for May 2, 2020—all are invited to attend
- **SLA Report:**
 - Some great events to raise funds, including a breakfast and a thrift day clothes exchange
- The Home & School has many graduating parents and is looking for new volunteers
- The RWA Foundation is hosting a Pub Quiz Night fundraiser
- A budget update was provided

Meetings take place in the school library at 7 PM—all are welcome. Hope to see you at our next meeting on March 26, 2020. In case you miss us, the minutes are posted on the Royal West Academy website.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2–6	March Break
March 12	Parent-Teacher Interviews 3:15 PM–5:30 PM & 7 PM–9:30 PM
March 13	Pedagogical Day
March 13–15	Senior ski trip
March 16	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
March 16–20	MindPOP Math
March 20	Dance Show
March 20	Pedagogical Day (afternoon)
March 26	Governing Board meeting @ 7 PM
March 27	Dessert Concert @ 7 PM
March 31	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM

RWA
News

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Jena Price (Sec IV student)

Christy Tannous (Vice-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 rwaneews@gmail.com.

