



Valley Regional High School

Chester -- Deep River -- Essex

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DECEMBER 2011 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the last several weeks, the halls outside the music department and the auditorium have been filled with dramatic and festive student voices and instrumental sounds. It would also be difficult to miss the transformation of the art gallery. The gallery has gradually become filled with a wide variety of paintings, jewelry, sculptures, and ceramics that communicate student voice in its expression of contemporary issues and experiences. This flurry of activity can mean only one thing in early December: preparations for the Winterfest Concert and Art Show are well underway. On December 7 at 7:00 pm in the Valley Regional High School auditorium, our many and talented choral groups, soloists, and instrumentalists will perform a number of festive, winter classics like “Baby it’s Cold Outside” and “You’re a Mean One, Mr. Grinch”, French holiday melodies such as “Patapan”, and dramatic overtures like “Festivo”. Our many and talented artists will also showcase their work in the gallery leading to the concert. We hope you will join us for an evening that highlights the excellence many of our students strive for in music and the arts.

Over the Thanksgiving break, fifteen Valley Regional High School students accompanied by Ms. Wheaton and Ms. Meehan spent one week fully immersed in French culture and education in Castres, France. Our students, pictured below, enjoyed improving their French language skills while attending classes with many of the same French students who visited Valley Regional High School last year. It is our hope this mutually beneficial exchange and experience will continue for many years to come.



Our students continue to commit to excellence in all that they do. Here are just a few of the highlights from this past month:

- Members of Interact Club collected more than 100 winter coats to distribute to those in need and are in the process of collecting holiday gifts for children in the Tri-Town area.
- Ryan Pomroy was named All-State 1st Team. Ryan Pomroy and Mason King were named All Shoreline 1st Team and Chris Polo and Jonathan Luster were named All Shoreline 2nd Team in soccer. Jake Cayer and Kyle Peterson earned honorable mention.
- Members of Youth Action Council, Leo Club, and the Volleyball team raised \$450 for breast cancer awareness at the “Dig Pink” event.
- In volleyball, Hannah Wolfe was named to the All Shoreline 2nd Team.
- Glenn Holmes earned All-State and All Shoreline 1st Team in cross country.
- In field hockey, Anna Marie Carlson earned placement on All Shoreline 1st Team. Anna Javor, Bryanna Tobin, and Hannah VanBenschoten earned placement on All Shoreline 2nd Team. Brigit Crosbie earned Honorable Mention. Additionally, both Anna Marie Carlson and Anna Javor earned All State recognition.
- Our VRHS Football team has earned recognition as Pequot League Champions.
- Our VRHS Boys’ Soccer team won the Shoreline Championship.
- In VRHS Girls’ Cross Country, Amelia Eppard, Allison Gates, and Phoebe Petrovic were named All Shoreline 1st Team. Sarah Hammond earned placement as All Shoreline 2nd Team.

As a reminder, we are eager to increase involvement in VRHS Parent Council to plan future events that are both relevant and timely for our families. If you are interested, please join us at our next Parent Council meeting on January 11, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. In addition to finalizing preparations for the “Demystifying the College Search” event that will be held on February 1, 2012 at 7 p.m., we will also discuss planning events to welcome and transition the VRHS Class of 2016 and their families to Valley Regional High School. We would very much like to have parent input. If you would like to learn more about these opportunities, please do not hesitate to contact us.

As the school year progresses, please feel free to contact me with suggestions or comments to help continue to make Valley Regional High School the premier high school in Connecticut and the nation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kristina Martineau, Principal

Mr. Matt Talmadge, Associate Principal

DEPARTMENT NEWS

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT: VRHS hires new baseball and softball coaches. Gary Ballistrini has been hired as Head Baseball Coach at VRHS. He has 12 years experience as a head coach at Montville, Fitch-Groton, and New London High Schools. He also has American Legion baseball coaching experience with the Norwich and Niantic programs.

Kenneth Wilson has been hired as Head Softball Coach at VRHS. Ken is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College and has been active coaching softball at Guilford HS and with the CT Hornets, a summer travel softball program. He also stays active in ASA fast pitch and slow pitch programs and is an active umpire.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT: This past October, 130 Valley students took the PSAT's. Results will be returned to students in December before our winter break. The PSAT's are a great predictor of future SAT success and the students can access the provided website to help them improve their skills.

Here are a few websites that you may find useful:

www.about.com =great study skills ideas

<http://www.collegedata.com> or www.collegeXpress.com =college admissions/scholarship search

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator> =data/statistics on college information/ career info/ financial aid

Sophomores who are currently taking English this semester were introduced to the Bridges Program recently through a workshop session with the school counselors. Bridges is designed to help students start the process of researching potential career interest areas through interest inventories and other useful tools. You can view this program yourself by logging on to www.bridges.com. Helpful logon information: our **site id is: 0100076** and **password is "warrior"**. Your student will be setting up their own personal portfolio and password when they meet with us during part of their English class and will also be completing the interest inventory questionnaire at that time.

Juniors met with a school counselor in their AP US History or America in the 20th Century classes regarding post secondary options. These sessions included the following information: college research resources and how to research, standardized testing options, what colleges are looking for, college visits, alternatives to four year schools and guidelines for the next 1 ½ years. We will also be meeting early in the second semester with those students who do not have their US History until that time. For more information on the college research process, you can contact your student's counselor and/or you may visit the "Counseling" link under "Student Resources" on the VRHS website. The "Post H.S. Guide" is online and can answer many of your questions.

Senior parents: mark your calendars for our annual Financial Aid Presentation. This will take place in the Valley Auditorium on December 14 at 7 pm. This is a "must" if you are applying for financial aid and filing for the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Come find out everything you need to know about the process.

ACT date: The next dates to take an ACT are December 10 and February 11. Deadline and registration information can be accessed at www.actstudent.org or through the ACT link on our website.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT: Mrs. Meehan's Creative Writing students are currently submitting their poetry, short stories and one-act plays to a number of contests and magazines. Several students have had work published online by *Teen Ink* and one student is going to be published in an anthology.

Ten students attended the Shoreline Heads of English Departments Writing Conference in November. Hosted by Coginchaug Regional High School, students attended one-hour workshops in poetry, drama, journalism, memoir, short story, songwriting or the graphic novel. Valley participates in this writing conference yearly, and in the spring we will also enter the Shoreline Writing Contest.

Freshmen are currently reading *Romeo and Juliet*, and freshman/sophomore teacher Maureen Virgulto recently attended a full-day Shakespeare workshop at Yale University titled *Images and Words: Shakespeare's Moment to Moment*. Elm Shakespeare Company's teaching artists guided teachers in presenting scenes and monologues, drawing connections between the text, the moments on canvas, and in performance.

AP Composition is engaged in the study of argumentation including logic, the identification of logical fallacies, recognizing propaganda, and evaluating rhetorical techniques and strategies through rhetorical analyses. AP Literature has just finished studying the Victorian novel and is moving into the Modernist period with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Miss Dayton is currently teaching the CAPT Strategies class after school on Fridays from 2:35—3:35 in room 410. The class focuses on critical reading and analytical writing strategies that are essential to the Language Arts curriculum as well as success on the Reading and Writing sections of the CAPT test.

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT: Music

Winterfest Concert and Art Show: December 7, 2011 @ 7 pm is just around the corner. A reminder to parents that the concert dress is: Boys- Black dress shirt (bow ties will be lent out), black dress pants, black socks, dark dress shoes Girls- Black top, black dress pants, black/dark hose or black socks, black dress shoes—conservative jewelry. Students are expected to stay for the entire concert.

The New England Solo and Ensemble Festival will be held at Cheshire HS on Saturday, December 10 (time TBD). Over 84 auditions from Valley will be taking place.

Reminder: no photocopies will be allowed. Students must provide judge with copy of music (this could be a piano score). Bus transportation will be provided. Please review website for further information (www.nemfa.org) including dress code. **Important information can be found online under the following link:**
<http://www.valleymusic.wikispaces.com>

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER: Final projects and research papers are the order of the day in the media center this month. Students from Mr. Arrigoni's block one and two Social Studies classes, from Mrs. Sanford's block three U.S. History class, and from Mr. Goldman's block four Global Studies class, are all working hard on topics for substantive papers. In addition, Global Studies students in both Mr. Bernardi's and Mr. Goldman's classes are investigating the Holocaust and the origins of anti-Semitism.

Final projects, from brochures to PowerPoints to bulletin boards are due soon in Mr. Purdy's Health II classes. Topics for these include teen pregnancy, obesity, substance abuse, and STD's. Creative writers in Mrs. Meehan's class are charged with developing their own magazines from previous work, such as poetry, short stories and one-act plays, as well as new pieces like book reviews.

MATHEMATICS: The VRHS Math department is administering practice CAPT problems in all of the classes that contain freshmen and sophomores. The students solve a variety of open-ended and grid-in problems to help prepare them for the test. In addition to the in-class practice, we offer two 6-week after-school tutorial sessions, one currently running and one scheduled for after the New Year. If your son or daughter is invited to attend the tutorial, we encourage them to do so. It allows us to individualize instruction in areas that need concentration to help the student be as successful as possible on the CAPT.

The department will be giving the second of three Universal Screenings in math classes this month. The students take the same test they took at the beginning of the course with our goal being to see growth in their knowledge and understanding of the information that the curriculum contains. The data that we gather from this assessment is used to help us determine if re-teaching is necessary and to improve our instruction. Please feel free to contact Kim White, Math Department Coordinator, with any questions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Congratulations to our Quarter 1 Badminton Final Four Teams for qualifying for representing their class in the Quarter 1 Sweet Sixteen Tournament:

Block 1 – Ben Bourez & Alex Cassells, Grace Carver & Dylan Stempel, Jonah Fidel & Brian Shepard, Julia Tackett & Bryanna Tobin

Block 2 – Paul Calamari & Nick Campbell, Chris Patton & Mitch Trowbridge, Chelsea Cook & Liza Jones, Trevor Dinwoodie & Isaac Siegal

Block 3 – Ben Belisle & Matt Camilleri, Greg Merola & Paul Myers, Andrew Goehring, Zack Merola & Nate Tyler

Block 4- Luke Gagnon & Megan Sasena, Ben Ferucci & Taylor Riggio-McGrath, Abby Tibbetts & Joan Wyeth, Sara Giangrande & Hannah Partyka

Thank You's: The HPE Department would like to thank more of our guest instructors from our tri-town community for volunteering their time and equipment to bring these new and exciting fitness sessions or health lessons to Valley Regional.

Lou Brockett of “A Second Chance” – Lou Brockett certifies our Advanced Health students in First Aid and CPR



Above: Senior Karli Bahner is learning the ins and outs of running a small business through her internship at Gather Ivoryton, CT.

Right: Senior Emma Meeks gets a feel for one aspect of journalism at Shore Publishing in Madison, CT

SCHOOL-TO CAREER

This quarter, students are participating in career internships in a variety of settings and learning a great deal from professionals in the community. Current placements are as follows:

Café Routier, Westbrook, CT

Circle of Friends Montessori School, Chester, CT

Deep River Animal Hospital, Deep River, CT

Dr. Dana Rotella, DDS, Essex, CT

Essex Elementary School, Essex, CT

John Winthrop Middle School, Deep River, CT

Gather, Ivoryton, CT

Region 4 Schools food service department, Deep River, CT

River Tavern, Chester, CT

Shore Publishing, Madison, CT



in



Left: Senior Danielle Greatsinger is experiencing hands-on what it is like to be a pastry chef at Café Routier in Westbrook, CT

Post- Secondary School and Company Tours: On Friday, October 26, 2011, thirty students visited the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) in Warwick, Rhode Island. Students learned about the variety of hands-on, career-oriented programs offered there including graphics, multi-media and web design, mechanical engineering, criminal justice, marine technology, automotive technology, surgical assisting, nursing and many others. NEIT offers Associate's degrees, Bachelor's degrees and one Master's degree program.

On Friday, December 1, 2011, students in Mr. Taber's architecture classes and students interested in careers related to architecture visited Centerbrook Architects in Centerbrook, CT. They learned from the architects what is involved in becoming an architect and they received a tour of the facilities at Centerbrook Architects.

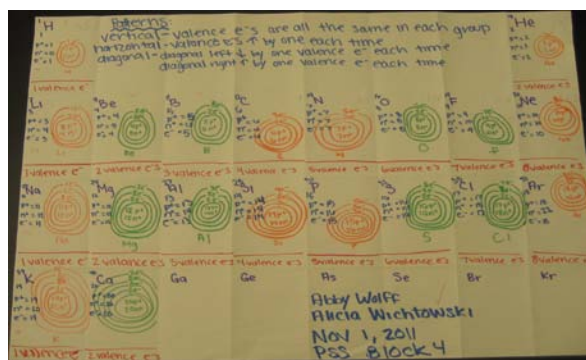
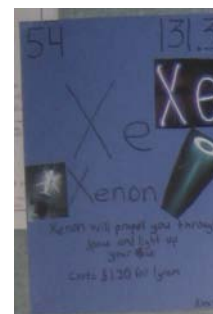
On Thursday, December 8, 2011, students will tour Whelen Engineering in Chester, CT. This trip is open to students in Mr. Taber's Engineering classes as well as any student interested in learning more about Whelen Engineering and the vast array of jobs performed there. This trip is perfect for seniors who may be looking for full-time employment after graduation from high school and might like to learn more about what is offered at this local company. Interested students should see Mary Hambor in the School-to-Career office.

For more information about the School-to-Career program, contact Mary Hambor (mhambor@vrhs.com) or visit the link to the VRHS web site.

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT: Fall is here! The spectacular colors of the fall foliage never cease to amaze us. But, did you ever wonder how and why the leaves change color every year? Dr. Peano's Biology class investigated this very question. First, they participated in a Photosynthesis and Respiration Exploration where they identified the gasses exchanged in these processes. Students then learned about the parts of the plant cell that give most deciduous tree leaves their green color. They concluded in a lab activity that the amount of light provided to plants determines the rate of photosynthesis. The changes in light, temperature, and water cause the green pigment in chloroplasts to disappear. What is underneath all that green chlorophyll? Other pigments, which have been there all along! These pigments, such as a bright orange, red and yellow, become visible to our eyes. Now our biology students will be able to look at this spectacular Northeastern tourist attraction with a scientific eye.



The PSS students have recently completed a unit on Atoms and the Periodic Table. We've learned to write atoms in standard notation, diagram them in two dimensions, build models of them in three dimensions, and to predict from their valence electrons how they will bond with each other. We've also looked for patterns to help us understand and use the Periodic Table. We now have many of the fundamentals of chemistry under our belts!



SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT: Research Paper writing time is here! Students in **Global Studies** and **America in the 20th Century** have begun the lengthy process of conducting research and devising a thesis statement about a given topic. Students will not only be improving their writing, but will also develop the essential skills needed to conduct research and evaluate credible sources.

The stress on writing has also carried over to **Civics** classes. Students in Global Studies and Civics have been improving their interdisciplinary writing skills in a variety of ways. Students recently began working on devising a thesis statement and then citing evidence to support their stance. Students in Global Studies have practiced this skill by analyzing primary sources that coincide with World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the Years of Crisis. In Civics, students took a position on the death penalty and its potential abolition using support from the Troy Davis case, the Bill of Rights, and other primary source articles. Students also took a position on the need, or lack thereof, to change the Federal government in light of some of the Constitutional questions that have arisen during Barak Obama's Presidency.

Civics students this quarter will also be fortunate enough to have two guest speakers! On November 8, James Tillman, as well as Karen Goodrow, the Director of the Connecticut Innocence Project, will be visiting Civics classes to talk about James' experience with the justice system in Connecticut. This will take place in the broader context of the study of the Judicial Branch of government and their ongoing study of the concept of justice in the American political system.

Senior students in **Contemporary Issues** are presently starting research on their Senior Portfolios. This is a two month, long range assignment which incorporates all of the goals of the course and coincides with Valley's Mission Statement for academic and social and civic expectations for all graduates. These portfolios constitute thirty percent of the course grade with the stated purpose being to encourage the student to display the depth and breadth of knowledge on an important issue of their choice. These portfolios are formally presented to the class as a whole for discussion and commentary.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Graphic Arts: Have you noticed lately during Block 2 students running around the hallways in strange makeup and costume being followed by other students with cameras and boom microphones? Well-that's the Graphic Arts class hard at work with their latest project. Groups of students have joined together to produce short films. Currently, there are



three films in production: One group is filming a story about cell phones and how important they are to students and society with a twist, while the second group is in make-up, premeditating a Zombie invasion. The last short film is a realistic story, but falls into a dream where the main character is invisible. Overall, the goals of the projects are to provide opportunities for students to learn acting techniques, camera and editing techniques, storytelling and screenwriting. The entire production process is followed, from pre-production storyboarding and scriptwriting, to the actual production work and post-production, including editing and finishing work.



Valley Television is taking a huge leap this coming year. With a passionate film crew, creative writers, and enthusiastic actors, Valley Television is revved up and rolling. Many short films, music videos, and a possible full-length movie will be created by hard working students. Students have the opportunity to sign out equipment that is comparable to the professionals. There have been new additions like a helmet camera, The Go-Pro and the ever ongoing project of the crane is almost completed. Students meet every other Wednesdays for a mandatory meeting to keep organization and updates. Other Wednesdays are open labs for students to work on their projects. The film crew is lead by President Lindsay Grote and Vice President Forrest Perkins who have taken the Graphic Arts courses to a whole new level. We have plans to film many upcoming sporting events which will be edited and aired on television. Valley Television has a dedicated and large group this year with the proud advisors, Mr. LeQuire, Mr. Purdy, and Mr. Pitman.



Introduction to Photography is an introductory class that allows students to learn more about the artistic aspects of the media. In this class, students are divided into two groups which study Photoshop programs and learn to take creative pictures using 35 mm film cameras. For four weeks at a time, we devote our class periods to projects that are due weekly. In the digital group, students turn in makeover shots, remade advertisements, and multi image photos. When using the film cameras, students learn to portray emotions, sounds, people, and landscapes in their photography. Some of the equipment that is accessible to the students is the dark room, which allows students to develop their pictures, and the new Mac lab and digital cameras, which are used for those working on Photoshop. Introduction to Photography is a casual, open class which allows students to be creative and express themselves through art.

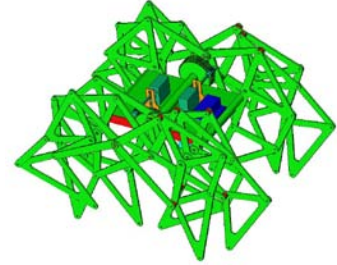
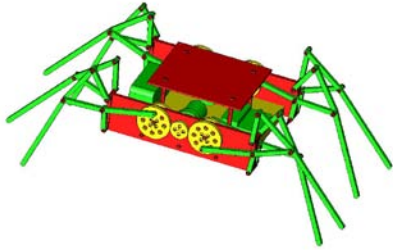


The Advanced Photo class of Valley Regional High School is reserved for those who have completed and passed Intro to Photo. Students possess much more freedom, receiving a list of 40 projects at the beginning and choosing 12 to complete over the course of the quarter. Some examples of the available projects include bulb shots, wild life, age & decay, HDR prints, and studio portraits. Students have access to the 35 mm cameras *and* the brand-new Canon digital cameras recently purchased.

Professional studios and lights are set up for photographers. Photoshop CS5 may be utilized to create eye-popping images with extreme details. The Advanced Photo class is a great demonstration of the artistic talent of Valley Regional.



Engineering Design: After extensive research and development the Advanced Engineering Design class teams have finished designing their linkage machines. They are now in the process of manufacturing parts through the use of Mastercam and our CNC Router/Miller. The machines, when finished, will operate by remote control across the floor and be able to navigate some obstacles. Below you can see the students' designs. The machine on the left is modeled from a Theo Jansen design and the right from the Klann linkage concept. We will update the progress of this exciting project as it develops.



Architectural Design: Students are developing their home designs that will fulfill the requirements given to them in a design brief. Many creative designs are coming from the students from a variety of perspectives. Below are just a couple of examples. After the house plan layouts are completed, students will then research and integrate energy efficient concepts to the existing plans.



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION – Consumer

Sciences: Members of Miss Chapman's Foods 1 class enjoyed a beautiful sunny day and some apple picking in October. Students studied the various types of apples grown at Scott's Orchard, located behind Valley. Students selected recipes and prepared several different varieties. We are so lucky to have such a beautiful orchard right in our own backyard.



WORLD LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

The French Department has 2 international trips in the 2011 – 2012 school years.

- The French Exchange (15 students) traveled from Nov 18 - 28, 2011. We spent the weekend in Paris and then flew to Toulouse where our French hosts met us. We went to a French high school and lived with French families for a week. We lived, for the most part, with the same student, whom we hosted in October, 2010. A wonderful time was had by all on the French Exchange. The weather was beautiful – sunny, blue skies, fairly warm every day. The students all want to return and feel that their French has definitely improved. They found that French school was different in many ways from our school – an open campus, a flexible schedule of 45 minute classes, 2 hour lunch, little to no technology in the entire school, no school sports and many different subjects for the students. All students must take 2 languages, as well as French, and must study philosophy. A little quirk that everyone noticed – all students stand when a teacher enters a room and do not sit until the teacher invites them to do so. The excursions after school to the Toulouse Lautrec Museum in Albi, to the fortified chateau Carcassonne and to the beautiful city of Toulouse were enriching and informative. We all enjoyed the trip and found our French counterparts to be warm and welcoming. Our “peek” into their lives gave us both insight into their culture and into their nature. Now we will be getting ready to welcome our French correspondents here in October, 2012!
- Our second trip is to the Winter Carnival in Quebec, Canada from Feb 2 – 5, 2012. It is not over February break. We will be driving dogsleds, snowshoeing, tubing, enjoying the sights of the Carnival and speaking French.

First year Latin students had been studying Roman recipes and food customs, in preparation for their class' Roman-style banquet held on November. 21. They visited the underwater archaeology exhibit at the Mystic Aquarium to learn how recent deep-water exploration of submerged towns and shipwrecks has yielded new examples of pottery and other artifacts. Features include a model of the three-part construction of large amphorae for shipping and storage, plus an ancient shipwreck remarkably well preserved in the anoxic area at the bottom of the Black Sea.

Advanced Latin Poetry students visited the Slater Memorial Museum in a class-time field trip Wednesday, November 2. Located at Norwich Free Academy, this museum features a collection of plaster casts, financed by a very wealthy philanthropist in the 19th century when Norwich was booming with textile manufacture, shipping, and the railroad. Following a round-the-world yacht tour (from which objects are displayed), Mr. Slater funded the acquisition of statues made by molding plaster images of the original Greek art. Many well known pieces such as the Nike and pediment figures from the Parthenon and the temple of Zeus at Olympia are able to be seen as sculptures which are exact replicas of the originals. Mr. Slater donated the collection to the city, so that people not likely ever to afford to travel as he had, could appreciate them.

INTERACT CLUB has been busy with a number of projects and activities this school year. The students collected gently worn coats and sleeping bags during all home football games and in the library media center at VHRS. Coats were delivered to St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown.

On October 30, 2011, students worked with members of the Essex Park and Recreation and helped carve pumpkins and helped with other activities at the Ivoryton Pumpkin Festival.

Four students attended the Rotary Youth Leadership Conference on November 4-6, 2011 in Stratford. At this conference, they had the opportunity to meet Interact Club students from all over the state and brainstorm project ideas, etc. Their attendance was sponsored by the Deep River and Essex Rotary Clubs.

On Saturday, November 19, 2011, students helped out with bowling events for Connecticut Special Olympics in East Haven.

Proceeds from a bake sale in October will be used to purchase holiday gifts for needy families this Christmas.

The VRHS National Honor Society presents our annual

Holiday Breakfast with Santa



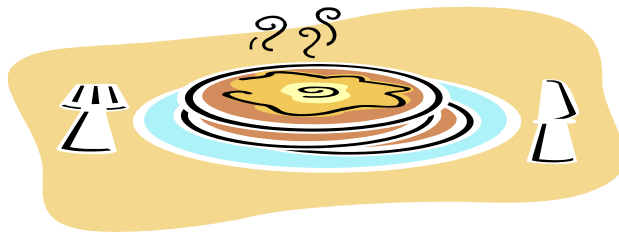
When: December 10, 2011

Where: Valley Regional High School Cafeteria

What Time: 8:30am-11:30am

Price: \$6.00 for adult, \$4.00 for children age 12 or under

Meet Santa and enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast!



Contact KBergman@vrhs.com for more information.

**Valley Regional
High School
Season Tickets
2011-2012 Athletics**

FULL YEAR

<i>Family Pass</i>	<i>\$125.00</i>
<i>Adult Pass</i>	<i>\$75.00</i>
<i>Student Pass</i>	<i>\$40.00</i>

BASKETBALL ONLY

<i>Family Pass</i>	<i>\$75.00</i>
<i>Adult Pass</i>	<i>\$40.00</i>
<i>Student Pass</i>	<i>\$25.00</i>

Passes include all HOME games throughout the “2011-2012 Season”.

Passes do not include tournament or state games.