



WEEK OF OCTOBER 19, 2009

Shawnigan Parent News



Photos: Rugby TRS XV by Stephen Lane. For more photos and stories, go to <http://www.shawnigan.ca/now>

University Guidance – Beth Hall, Director

The Guidance Office is in full swing and eager to help our upcoming grads create some options for their post-secondary ventures. Our graduating class has 123 students this year, and the number of applications they submit will exceed 600. That is a lot of data to manage! We're fortunate to have a team ready to assist them every step of the way.

We began the year with small group meetings to give our Grade 12 students a timeline for the fall and get them started on some tasks related to their application choices. This included a questionnaire and on-line personality inventory to serve as a springboard to further conversations about their choices. Then, in recent weeks, we've been meeting with students individually to create an initial plan that we will revise over time as their choices become more concrete.

John Sarsfield has been working closely with students who have chosen to apply to the U.K. The deadline for applications to U.K. medical schools, or to Oxford or Cambridge, was October 15, so there was much work to be done before that. John has spent hours in the last few weeks carefully going over their personal statements, application information and references. Other U.K. application deadlines are later this year, so there is no panic for the rest of the students looking at this as an option. John will continue assisting these applicants, as well as students applying to Canadian institutions.

Jim Kingstone is a great resource for students applying to U.S. universities. In addition to this sage advice about the appropriateness of different college choices, Jim works closely with them on the critical components of their applications. Most U.S. applications require an essay, or essays, to be written as an important part of the admission decision. Jim began holding writing workshops last spring and had students work on their personal statements through the summer. Now his focus is to have the students perfect their statements before they become part of the application package.

Debra John has joined the team to connect the work she does with students in Planning 10 with the tasks they need to complete in Grade 12 in order to satisfy Ministry guidelines for graduation. Ideally, the process of making choices for post-secondary study is something that students begin to research early. Debra starts this journey with Grade 10 students so they become familiar with some of the research tools, vocabulary, and options to think about. Once in grade 12, she coordinates the work they do for their Graduation Transitions credits and will assist them as they begin their Canadian application work later this fall.

Deadlines for most applications are still weeks or months away, but the work we do with students early in the fall will lay the groundwork for what is to come. For the majority of students who are applying to institutions in Canada, the application is a relatively easy process and we will help them through the steps when the time comes. In the meantime, we encourage any parents who would like more information to call or write us anytime. There is information in the Parent Handbook that might help answer some questions, but we are always willing to chat on the phone or answer an email. We're looking forward to meeting many of you when you come to the school for a visit for Parents' Day in November.

Staff Profile – Damaris Barry

The commissary (our school store) is not just a place to buy a pen, some shampoo, an energy bar or any of the other almost 3,000 individual items on the shelves. It's also a financial hub for students, a

Upcoming Events:

- Nov. 4-5** Parents Open House
- Nov. 5-9** Mid-Term Break - begins at noon on Thursday and ends at 8:00pm on Monday.
- Nov. 22-27** International Week

bank of sorts, handling their allowances, travel funds, house funds, and team meal monies. It's even the place to pick up those all important parcels from home. And, as all Shawnigan parents know, school uniforms are also ordered and sold through the commissary.

"The biggest challenge for me is always having in stock what we need," says Commissary Manager Damaris Barry. "New students have different buying habits, so it's a matter of learning what they want. And then it's a matter of relying on suppliers and shippers to bring in what I've ordered."

Several years ago, Damaris also started coaching an after school fitness program that blended various training techniques from yoga to boxercise. Damaris is, herself, a champion athlete, setting the provincial record this year for her age group in slalom water skiing. She's modified her fitness program over the years and the class now focuses on strength, conditioning, flexibility and core building. It is designed to allow students who are already athletically inclined to improve their skills in their particular sport. But Damaris gets really inspired by the not-so-athletic students who sign up. "They come in with a low sense of fitness and conditioning. It's so rewarding to see the transformation in their fitness levels and their confidence," she says. Those kinds of transformations are also what she likes best about working in the Commissary.

"By far the best part of this job is interacting with the students and seeing the shyer ones come around as the weeks progress," she says, but then adds gleefully that "the most exciting thing this year so far has been getting a new freezer. I won't have to worry about it breaking down."

Educating Students on Technology and The Public Domain

In Chapel on Tuesday morning, the Headmaster spoke to students about the upside of technology and what it can add to education and life, but he also spoke about the downside. "There are significant dangers out there with technology, but if we can bring the same essential standards to bear that we do in our lives here, colouring everything with respect, courtesy and good manners, then we will avoid a lot of potential difficulties."

Mr. Robertson explained what the "public domain" meant and how easy it was for very personal information and details to end up there. He recommended that we ask ourselves these questions before posting images or remarks on the Internet (Facebook, Myspace, etc.) or when you are texting:

- 1) Do I want anyone/EVERYONE to see this?
- 2) Will someone be offended by it?
- 3) Will it give someone the wrong impression of me?
- 4) Will it reflect badly on me, on my family, on my friends, or my school?

"By all means, use the amazing technology at your disposal, but keep your good sense and your values system operating while you do so."