



## Virginia Middle School Association Newsletter

MARCH, 2013

Liz Phillips, Editor

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### SAVE THE DATE FOR 2014 VMSA CONFERENCE!



Dr. Nancy Doda

The 2014 VMSA Conference will be held at JMU, on Friday October 24, with the theme *"This We Believe... This We Do"* and will have two keynote speakers. This year's speakers are Dr. Nancy Doda and Dr. Monte Selby! These renowned speakers are in agreement that our theme is a very relevant one due to a new generation of educators that may not have a working knowledge of the entire the middle school concept. For many seasoned teachers and administrators, the theme offers refreshment and rejuvenation. *Mark your calendars now so your fall plans do not overlap!*



Dr. Monte Selby

### STRENGTHENING SCHOOL SAFETY & CLIMATE SEMINAR

Nationally recognized speaker Rick Phillips will conduct a one-day seminar on school safety and climate at James Madison University on May 5, 9:00am-4:00 pm. Designed for administrators who already have a lot to juggle, this event offers strategies, resources, and tools that leaders can share with classroom teachers.

There is a \$65 prepaid registration fee that includes a Continental breakfast and lunch (discounted \$10 per person when two or more from the same school district attend).

Directors, principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, and school board members are encouraged to attend.

Contact Dana Haraway for more information: [harawadk@jmu.edu](mailto:harawadk@jmu.edu) or 850-324-0992.

#### PROBLEM-SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

If you have the best suggestion or solution for this middle school problem, send an email to the editor! There's a \$10 Starbucks gift card in it! Deadline: March 31, 2014.

[editor.vmsa.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.vmsa.newsletter@gmail.com)

**Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) has become a key factor in improving students' writing skills. What does your team do to make writing across the four disciplines effective for student growth as learners?**

## **REGION SIX NEWS: ROANOKE COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOLS EMBRACE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

Submitted by Dr. Ken Nicely, Region 6 Director

Glenvar Middle School in Roanoke County, Virginia, has embraced the school division's philosophy of creating an educational balance. Although everyone in the school community recognizes the importance of doing well on SOLs, we also understand the importance of providing our children with much deeper learning experiences: learning experiences that require our children to collaborate, communicate and think critically in order to design, create, and solve problems. The staff, students, and parents understand that these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are the tools that will be needed for our students to be employable in the future.

Glenvar Middle School has embraced several new instructional techniques geared at giving our students more opportunities for deeper learning. Two instructional strategies that both students and staff have become very excited about are Project-Based Learning and Design Challenges. The students and the staff agree that these deeper learning strategies have led to better student and teacher engagement, renewed enthusiasm for both learning and teaching, and a better overall educational experience. Brian Crockett, a seventh-grade life science teacher and member of the school's professional development team, has developed a renewed enthusiasm for teaching. He states, "Project-Based Learning has drastically changed the manner in which I deliver instruction in the life science classroom. I am more excited about teaching, and students are definitely more excited about learning! In the end, it really does come down to simply providing students with better lessons, lessons that no longer leave the students with the lingering question of why do I have to know this?"

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## **SUMMER 2015 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL OP!**

Around the 24th of June, 2015, teachers from Southwest Virginia are going to England for ten or eleven days. Teachers will visit the Eden Project, the Jurassic Beach, Plymouth's Mayflower launch site, Avebury Henge, Stonehenge, London, and possibly Bath and/or the Cheddar Gorge and Caves. This trip is now open to all educators and school personnel in Virginia. Because the trip is more than a year away, monthly payments will make the trip more affordable. If you are interested in going to England and learning how to turn your travels into rich experiences and lessons for your classroom, please contact Liz Phillips via email: [ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us](mailto:ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us). When contacted, she will send you the itinerary and the directions for registering for the trip. If you would like to also inquire about getting PD credit for this trip, Liz will be happy to provide information and a contact person who can help make arrangements.



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MARCH Interesting Days of Significance

- Interesting Tribute Weeks in March**  
 National Bubble Week (8-11)  
 National Procrastination Week (8-14)  
 American Chocolate Week (16-22)  
 Act Happy Week (17-23)  
 World Folk Tales & Fables Week (17-23)  
 NanoDays Week (3/29-4/6)

- March Celebrations**  
 Music in Our Schools Month  
 National Craft Month  
 National Frozen Food Month  
 National Nutrition Month  
 National Panut Month  
 National Women's History Month  
 Red Cross Month  
 Brain Injury Awareness Month  
 International Ideas Month  
 National Kite Month

9	Panic Day
10	Middle Name Pride Day
13	Ear Muff Day
	Popcorn Lover's Day

14	National Pi Day
	National Potato Chip Day
15	Incredible Kid Day
	Drumstick Day
	Ides of March
16	Freedom of Information Day
17	St. Patrick's Day
19	Poultry Day
20	International Earth Day
22	National Goof Off Day
23	National Chip and Dip Day
24	Chocolate Covered Raisin Day
25	National Agriculture Day
	Pecan Day
	Waffle Day
26	Make Up Your Own Holiday Day
28	Something on a Stick Day

**SPECIAL DATES FOR FIRST FEW DAYS OF APRIL**

National Humor Month      National Poetry Month      Stress Awareness Month

Week 1: Library Week

Week 4: National Karaoke Week

1      April Fool's Day

4      School Librarian Day

2      Peannut Butter & Jelly Day

7      Caramel Popcorn Day

## **20 FUN FACTS TO SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS**

As we—students and educators—approach a new season loaded with sunshine, rain showers, stress, and social drama, let’s take a look at some fun trivia that will make someone smile or laugh.

1. Shakespeare invented the words “assassination” and “bump.”
2. Girls blink nearly twice as much as boys.
3. The average chocolate bar has eight insect legs in it.
4. The average human eats eight spiders in their lifetime at night.
5. It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.
6. The longest one-syllable word in the English language is “screched.”
7. A snail can sleep for three years.
8. The electric chair was invented by a dentist.
9. Banging your head against a wall uses 150 calories an hour.
10. “I am.” is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.
11. The longest word in the English language is 1,909 letters long and refers to a distinct part of DNA.
12. Leonardo Da Vinci invented the scissors.
13. A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.
14. Polar bears are left-handed.
15. A cockroach will live nine days without its head before starving to death.
16. Peanuts are one of the ingredients in dynamite.
17. A cat has 32 muscles in one ear.
18. The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.
19. In most advertisements, including newspapers, the time on a watch is 10:10.
20. A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds.

Source: [www.timmytutor.com](http://www.timmytutor.com), “True, But Funny Facts for Kids”

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## **VMSA MASTER TEACHER AND EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS—DEADLINE APPROACHING!**

If you have not submitted the paperwork necessary to nominate a teacher or other educator in your school, please note that the deadline is March 15.

Attendees of the 2013 VMSA Conference last October were given informational fliers about each award. To find the online criteria for your submission for a nominee, go to the VMSA website: [www.vmsa.org](http://www.vmsa.org). When the nomination packet has been assembled, email your submission in one email attachment to the following email address: [awards@vmsa.org](mailto:awards@vmsa.org).