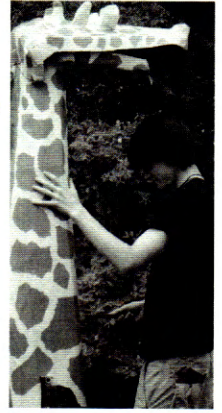


The GOVERNOR'S INSTITUTES of VERMONT



November 2006

ANNUAL Update

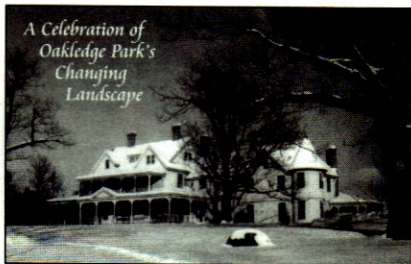


OAKLEDGE PARK: GIV SERVICE-LEARNING AT ITS BEST

Paul Bierman, Professor of Geology, University of Vermont, and GIV Science and Technology Faculty

“Here’s a wonderful example of students gaining so much by their efforts, while at the same time giving back to the community that hosted them and catalyzed their learning.”

The 2003 GIV Science and Technology team left their mark on Oakledge Park. Indeed, they left seven large, colorful marks – permanent, interpretive signs that explain the story of the grassy lawns and tangled woodlands covering Burlington’s south shoreline. The signs tell of ancient seas and mansions of the wealthiest Burlington residents, mansions that 100 years later went up in flames with a bucket of kerosene and a fireman’s match. Images on the signs show a magnificent farm with neat barnyards where today condominiums sprout. What the signs don’t show is how they got there, the outcome of service learning at its best. Here’s a wonderful example of students gaining so much by their efforts while at the same time giving back to the community that hosted them and catalyzed their learning.



It wasn’t an easy or quick path from the first steps off the GIV bus in June 2003 to the celebration, with Governor Douglas presiding, three years later. First, there was a week of asking questions and finding clues as varied as the students themselves. Old post cards from the UVM library showed us that there was much more to Oakledge Park than a few tennis courts, lots of Monkton Quartzite, and a nice beach. There had been a magnificent Victorian home and barnyard, a resort, a private club, and plans for development that would have kept the public off these wonderful shores. These hints caught the group’s interest and from then on there

was no stopping any of us. A metal detector helped find the buried porch posts of the now-vanished mansion. The archives at Shelburne Farms and archivist Julie Edwards were a treasure trove, and with 30+ archival images in our hands, we knew just what Oakledge had looked like in the 1880s. Everyone wanted to share what they had learned. By the end of the week, nearly a dozen posters showed the group’s vision of what interpretive signs might look like in the park. But it didn’t stop here. I remember the students asking total strangers what they knew about the park’s history. Most knew nothing at all. Feeling they were on to something really special, the students organized Oakledge history day and more than 100 people came to share what they knew and to learn from the GIV students.

“The dream of 12 high school students to teach a community about the richness of its landscape was about to be a reality.”

VERMONT MATH STUDENTS AMONG TOP IN NATION

The performance of Vermont high school students on state and national mathematics examinations and competitions has been exceptional, and nearly all those top math students have attended the **Governor's Institute in the Mathematical Sciences**. An annual major national competition draws scores of teams of students from across the country to prove their mathematical prowess. Teams are divided into divisions: Division A for teams from larger states and urban areas, and Division B from less populous states, like Vermont. Some states send as many as five teams to the competition.

In **2003** Vermont placed 10th out of 71 teams in Division B and 33rd out of all teams in both divisions.

In **2004** the Vermont team turned in its top performance ever in the 29-year history of the tournament. Our team placed 7th out of 63 teams in Division B and 28th out of the 88 teams in both divisions.

In **2005** and **2006** our math students again scored high. **Mike Kling**, a Governor's Institute in Mathematical Sciences student from Essex, placed 11th out of 1,695 students — the highest ever achieved by a Vermont student.

2006 TEACHER RECOGNITION NIGHT

Thursday, 13 July 2006
Governor's Institute on Engineering

Fayneese Miller, Dean of the University of Vermont College of Education & Social Services, presented awards to teachers who were recognized by students during **Teacher Recognition Night** on Thursday, July 13 at the Governor's Institute on Engineering.

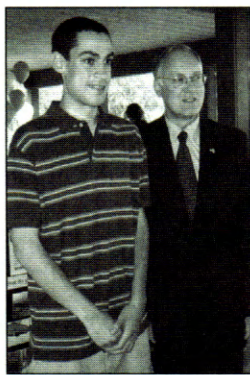
Fayneese addressed the 130 attendees, noting that it is passionate teachers who change the world. She encouraged students to pursue their dreams and not allow challenging circumstances to stop them.

Approximately thirty students recognized significant teachers in their lives. Ten teachers were present to speak and receive a framed certificate from UVM.

Teacher Recognition Night was added to the Governor's Institute on Engineering in 2004. Past speakers have been Madeleine Kunin and Lt. Governor Brian Dubie.

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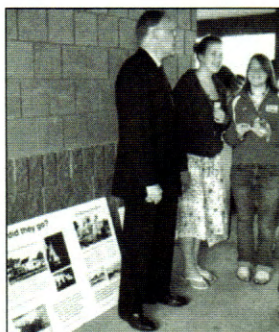
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It took almost three more years for the signs the students had first drafted in that busy June week to reach the park as permanent fixtures. In between there was funding from the Henderson Foundation to bring students and GIV staff back together. There were long nights and days spent condensing the signs and redrafting them over and over. Eric Butler, a Geology Education graduate student did much of the work and built the Oakledge webpage (uvm.edu/oakledge). Walks in the park with Jim Brangan of the Lake Champlain Basin Program and Bob Whalen from the Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation narrowed our focus. With support from the Basin Program, graphic designer Maja Smith took our ideas and made them shine.

The Lintilhac Foundation provided the resources to have the signs printed in laminate that should last a decade or more and then, in the middle of winter, with Oakledge frozen solid, the signs appeared in a big wooden box. It was going to happen. The dream of 12 high school students to teach a community about the richness of its landscape was about to be a reality.

Tyler Kieft, SAT alum from 2003, headlined the show at Oakledge Park on June 30, 2006, during the gala opening of the interpretive signs he and fellow SAT students help create. Governor Douglas helped commemorate the occasion. Guests included GIV Trustees and Executive Director, Jean Olson, Crea Lintilhac of the Lintilhac Foundation, Marshall Webb, descendant of the original Oakledge owners, Bob Whalen, Superintendent of Burlington Parks and Recreation, and designer Maja Smith. This year's students enjoyed a wonderful meal and were able to see how student work can serve the greater community.



Top, left: Governor Douglas with Tyler Kieft. **Top, right:** The gathering at Oakledge Park. **Bottom:** The Governor chatting with students in front of a few of the new, interpretive signs.