Hello Virginia TSA!

Last year, we reached new heights in terms of competitive event entries, students running for office, and member involvement – and this year is another chance to grow as a state! I am very honored to have been chosen to lead the officer team this term and cannot wait to see where the year takes us!

The Executive Council met during our New Officers’ Workshop in June to set a direction for the year and hit the ground running with plans for Fall Rallies, Leadership Academy, Technosphere, raising funds and increasing available scholarships, incorporating environmental initiatives into our organization, improving communication throughout the state, and assisting new and existing chapters with any concerns for the year. I am confident that the slate of officers you have selected will work their hardest to represent the new ideas and unique perspectives they each bring to the table! Included in this edition of the Virginia Scene are officer biographies for each Executive Council officer, where you can learn more about each officer, their interests, and what they are involved in outside of TSA.

This year will provide more opportunities than ever before for every Virginia TSA member to become more involved; from open Regional Officer positions, opportunities to serve on state committees, chances to submit articles for the website and the Virginia Scene, state community service projects, and events such as Regional Fall Rallies and the State-wide Leadership Academy focused on increasing involvement and fostering leadership skills in members across the state. A list of open officer positions and descriptions of committees that members are invited to join will be posted on the Virginia TSA website in the near future, so keep an eye out in the next couple of weeks!

If you have any questions about TSA, any of our Virginia TSA projects, or would just like to talk about ideas you have for Virginia TSA, please do not hesitate to contact me at jill.pritts.tsa@gmail.com at any time. One of the greatest parts of serving as an officer is the opportunity to work with students to make their ideas come to life and I’m looking forward to a great year!

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Pritts
Virginia TSA State President
Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Jill Pritts and I have the honor of serving as your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA President. I am a rising senior at Patrick Henry High School and I have been involved in TSA for the past six years. Through my time as both an officer and a member of the general delegation, I have had the opportunity to meet, work with, and compete against some of the most remarkable individuals that I have had the pleasure of knowing. I am very excited for our upcoming year as Virginia TSA continues to step forward with a growing membership, increased interest in leadership positions, outstanding support for state and regional community service efforts, and numerous recognitions for the accomplishments and hard work of each and every Virginia TSA member. Alongside our newly elected Executive Council, I look forward to working to increase communication, involvement, and leadership training across the state. In addition to TSA, I am a member of my school’s Key Club, National Honor Society, theatre organization, and Forensics Team, and I also play for my school’s Varsity Girls Tennis Team. I am so excited for the opportunity to represent Virginia TSA this year, so please feel free to contact me at jill.pritts.tsa@gmail.com at any time if you have ideas, comments, or suggestions! Respectfully Submitted,

Jill Pritts

Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Sierra Swisher, and I am your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA Vice-President. This year, I hope to get us more involved in the community than ever. Seeing that our membership is expanding and extending to more areas in Virginia, I believe it is essential for us to give back to the individuals in our unique communities and in Virginia as a whole. To do this, I plan to encourage participation in service projects on the regional levels and to ensure participation in the selected State Community Service Project. Alongside community service, I hope to enhance communication between the members and the Executive Council through Executive Council committees and other communication methods we have at our fingertips.

Although the Technology Student Association is a major part of my life, I am involved in many other school and community activities. This next year, I am a captain of the Buffalo Gap High School color guard, and I also participate in the Augusta County Winterguard. I run cross country and track as well as being a member of my high school’s forensic team, Latin club, and the Vice-President of the National Honor Society. Whenever I get a free moment, I like to spend time with my friends and family, hike, read, and, of course, get on Facebook.

Thank-you so much for giving me this opportunity to serve you.
Have a great year! I will see you at Technosphere 2013!
Yours Truly,
Sierra Swisher
Virginia TSA Secretary

Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Caleb Gum and I am proud to be serving as your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA Secretary. I will be a Junior at Turner Ashby High School and the Massanutten Regional Governor’s School. This will be my fifth year in TSA, and I’m looking forward to two more great years with the Virginia Technology Student Association. I am an Eagle Scout in Troop 38 of the Boy Scouts of America, and I also participate in Turner Ashby’s Debate, Forensics, and Scholastic Bowl teams. I love public speaking and parliamentary procedure, and just hanging out watching movies and fishing with my friends. Technosphere and National Convention are always highlights of my year, and I am proud to be a part of Virginia TSA. I truly look forward to serving as your Secretary this year, and I believe we can make it a successful one.

Caleb Gum

Virginia TSA Treasurer

Hello! My name is Arindam Gupta and I am your Virginia TSA state treasurer for the 2012-2013 school year. As treasurer I will keep accurate records of all funds make sure our financial obligations are met promptly. During this summer, I plan to travel to various different companies around the Virginia area to give presentations about what TSA is all about and just get ourselves out there more. From this, possible donations and sponsorships may be obtained which will result in lower conference costs. Currently, I am a rising sophomore in Richmond, VA at Freeman High School. This is almost my third year now being in TSA and I have enjoyed every bit of it! Outside of TSA, I am involved in FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) as well. I play football for my high school as wide receiver and tennis for my school team. I love to explore the world of technology and how things work and operate. I have many dreams and ambitions for my life ahead and in my opinion, it all starts from TSA. I look forward to serving and representing Virginia as treasurer and having a successful year ahead. Thank you!

Arindam Gupta
**Virginia TSA Reporter**

Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Molly Kirby and I am honored to have the privilege of serving as your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA Reporter. I am a rising Junior at Wilson Memorial High School where, aside from TSA, I play varsity volleyball, play on a Junior Olympians volleyball team, work at a local Hallmark Gold Crown store, and cherish time with my family and friends.

Although I am a very busy girl, I always make time for my favorite student run association, I bet you couldn't guess, the Technology Student Association. This will be my fifth year in TSA and my second year serving as a member of the Executive Council. This year I hope to use the Virginia Scene and the articles I receive from individuals across the state to show everyone just how awesome TSA members are. So if you would like to contact me with articles, questions, comments, or suggestions feel free to do so by emailing me at mkirbytsa@gmail.com. Let’s have a productive, successful, and fun year together!

Respectfully Submitted,
Molly Kirby

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**Virginia TSA Sergeant at Arms**

Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Adam Gambrel, I am a rising senior at Abingdon High School, and I am proud to be serving as your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA Sergeant-at-Arms. I am currently chapter vice president at Abingdon in my third year of TSA. Outside of TSA I love to sing and play piano as well as swim, hang out with my friends, and am very active in my local Scout Troop 222; I hope to attain my Eagle Scout this summer. This year I am looking forward to working with the executive council and especially the regional presidents to try and encourage more members to run for regional office. My goals for the coming year are to help increase membership by helping the regions expand, learn more about everyone I meet and make sure everyone is welcomed at all of our activities. I am very excited about serving as Sergeant-at-Arms this year and I hope to leave a lasting impression on Virginia TSA. We have much to accomplish in the coming months but I look forward to seeing everyone at the National Conference in Nashville and at Technosphere 2013! Good luck to everyone in their competitions!

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Gambrel
Virginia TSA Historian

I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your Virginia TSA Historian once again. My name is Gretchen Gross. I have been in TSA since my freshman year in high school. I have held school, regional, and state offices in my time with TSA. I am now a senior at Abingdon High School and am very active in promoting TSA throughout my region and state. I also participate in school and private swim teams competitively. I have acted in my schools plays for the past two years and have made county, district, and state chorus in the past. This year it is my goal to create the very first TSA yearbook that will be available to students on a CD. I will also strive in making the 2012-2013 State conference one of the best yet!

Gretchen Gross

Virginia TSA Parliamentarian

Hello Virginia TSA! My name is Rob McCutcheon, and I have been given the opportunity to serve as your 2012-2013 State Parliamentarian. I am a freshman at J.R. Tucker High School, and have been a member of TSA for 3 years.

As Virginia TSA Parliamentarian, I am ecstatic to be able to have a voice for and protect the rights of all members. I have several plans for the year to increase knowledge of parliamentary procedure and knowledge of the TSA constitution & bylaws, to push our organization further into the “green” field, to promote participation in the Virginia TSA Committees, to make general sessions more enjoyable, as well as take it a step up with community service involvement as a state delegation.

In addition to TSA, I am also committed to music, specifically piano, and am a member of the National Piano Guild. I also am a member of the FBLA, am active in the Junior Beta Club, and participate in many other activities. In my free time, you can find me spending time with friends, working out at my local gym, or staying up to date on current news and politics.

I know that with your continued support, this year can be the best yet.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rob McCutcheon
The Blue Ridge Region is currently looking for a regional president to represent them on the Virginia TSA Executive Council. This could be YOU! If you are interested in becoming more involved in our wonderful association, and taking on a new leadership position, please contact Jill Pritts at jill.pritts.tsa@gmail.com for more information!

Hello! My name is Elizabeth Roller and I am the Northern Region President this year. I had the pleasure of serving as the Northern Region President last year, and am honored to serve in this position once again. I am a senior at Oakton High School and have been in TSA since I was a freshman. Along with TSA, I am involved in many other clubs and organizations. I am an avid member of my schools Best Buddies chapter and will serve as the clubs secretary next year. I am also the vice president of the French and History honor societies. Though my schoolwork keeps me very busy, I still have made time to compete in the TSA competitions that I love, like photography and fashion. I love being a part of the leadership aspect of TSA and hope to help move this great organization forward.

Elizabeth Roller
South Central Region President

Greetings Virginia TSA! My name is Kathryn Hutchins-Duda and I have the honor of serving as your 2012-2013 Virginia TSA South Central Regional President. I am currently a junior at Deep Run High School and Highland Springs Technical Center in Henrico County. This is my sixth year of participating in TSA and it has been an amazing journey. TSA has opened my eyes to the wide world of engineering and technology, and made engineering into my future career. Some of my favorite competitions include System Control Technology, Chapter Team, and On Demand Video. System Control combines two of my passions TSA and FIRST Robotics. Also, I am a senior Girl Scout and I repair computers at my high school’s help desk. I am excited to put my experience to work this year as a member of your state executive council to help the association continue to grow and to help students “learn to live in a technical world!”

Kathryn Hutchins-Duda

Southwestern Region President

My name is Kurtis Gross. I am the 2012-2013 Southwestern Region President. I am a sophomore at Abingdon High School. I enjoy playing trumpet in the marching band, am a member of the swim team, play piano, and am an avid, if not devote gamer. My favorite TSA competitions are Webmaster and CAD engineering. I have placed at the state and national level in website and am really excited to be able to enter the CAD engineering competition at the national conference.

My current plans for this year are to improve the Southwestern Region Fall Rally by including activities that involve student participation. I have helped out at the Spring Fair for two years now, and will continue to do so even more now that I am regional president. I would also like to take this year’s website and make it a resource for communication for our chapter. I am looking forward to the challenge of serving well and growing the Technology Student Association in Virginia.

Kurtis Gross
Hello Virginia TSA I am Brett Fochtmann. I am the 2012-2013 TSA Tidewater District President. I have been involved in TSA since the 6th grade. I was on the Lego Robotics team and also the St. Clare Walker MS TSA president. I continued to attend the TSA after school program. During the 7th grade, I served as chapter president, as well as Tidewater District historian. I have been on the Tidewater TSA District Executive board for 3 years, serving as a historian for two years and sergeant at arms for one year before being elected to my present position of President. I attend Middlesex High School in Middlesex County. I enjoy playing the baritone saxophone in the concert and marching band as well as running on the cross country team. Some of my favorite competitions are debating technological issues, robotics, and video on demand. In my spare time I enjoy working with my Boy Scout Troop, Lower United Methodist Church youth group and hanging out with my friends. Additionally, I am currently pursuing my eagle scout rank. I look forward to this coming year as the Tidewater Regional President. For this school year, I am working on plans to increase membership along with getting our region more access to local news media and increasing knowledge of our organization and national community service project. I really look forward to serving with you on the 2012-2013 Virginia TSA Executive State board.

Brett Fochtmann

Hello, Virginia TSA. My name is Caleb Hurst, a rising junior at Turner Ashby High School, and I’m honored to serve as your 2012-2013 Valley Regional President. This is my fourth year in TSA, and my first as a member of the Executive Council. I’m a fierce competitor, and along with competing in TSA contests such as Extemporaneous Speaking, Debating Tech Issues and System Control Technology, I do a lot of competitions at my school. I’m a debater, Lincoln Douglas, to be specific, where I was lucky enough to make it to states this year. I also compete in the Forensics competition Impromptu Speaking, and am a member of our Scholastic Bowl team. When I finally get tired of working and studying, I like to backpack in the mountains near my home, get away from civilization for a while. I’m looking forward to another great year in TSA, and hopefully I’ll see you at the National Conference.

Caleb Hurst
Immediate Past President

Greetings Virginia TSA! The Immediate Past President of our association uses his or her experience to serve as an advisor to the President and the Council while continuing to play an active role in the formation and execution of Virginia TSA activities and policies. As such, I plan to continue to pursue my goal to further develop and grow our great organization whilst working diligently through whatever means to insure that every member of this organization continues to be instilled with a sense of pride with the great opportunities we offer to the leaders of tomorrow. As an alumnus, I find myself in the unique position to continue to give back to and serve the organization I love while in college. I am currently attending Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA and plan at present to major in either Mathematics or Chemistry while completing requirements for a Pre-Med program. TSA was the highlight of my high school career, and I am looking forward to the exciting year ahead as we continue to make it prosper.

Respectfully,
Luke Quigley

National Reporter

Hey! I’m Tess McNERLIN, your newly elected National TSA Reporter. First off, here’s a little run down on myself: I’m an upcoming junior at Abingdon High School in Abingdon, Virginia. TSA is a great big part of my life. I am involved at the chapter, regional, state and national levels. Outside of TSA I run, play tennis, a little golf here and there, teach violin, work, and sing at my church and school. I love to have fun and goof off with friends, but I also strongly believe in getting down to business when there is work to be done.

It’s always been a dream of mine to represent TSA nationally, and I am extremely honored to have the opportunity to do so. I’m really grateful for the team members I get to work with this year on the national and state levels. You elected some great officers who not only have awesome goals, but also have effective methods in which they plan to implement those ideas. We’re ready for some hard work and equally impressive advancements. Your thoughts and opinions are eagerly welcomed. We may be the officers, but it was you who placed us in these positions. Shoot us an email any time you have something to say. We’re here to listen. I’m so excited for this year in TSA; it’s going to be a great one!

Tess McNERLIN
Hello, If you are not already aware, my name is Andy Stephenson. I must say I am thrilled to be your new Virginia TSA State Advisor. This has been a “Home Coming” for me. I was born and raised in the Richmond area. My family moved to Kentucky during my High School years. I attended Eastern Kentucky University, where I met my wife, Laura. She was a Family and Consumer Science Major. I taught Technology Education in several school districts in Kentucky throughout my career. I taught both Middle & High School Levels. I stayed very involved in Co-Curricular & Extra-Curricular Activities within the school environment.

I have been involved at the Local, State & National level of TSA since 1996, when I was asked to judge Chapter Team & Problem Solving at the National Conference. Since that time I have been a Co-Advisor & Advisor, chartered one new chapter, mentored a State Officer, Served on the Kentucky TSA Advisory council and coordinated many events at the state level and two events at the national TSA conference since 2005. Along the way I also coached Baseball at 3 different High Schools, Coached a BEST robotics team and a FIRST robotics team. Professionally, I served various offices in my State Technology Educators Professional Association including President in 1999-2000 & two positions on the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Board of Directors including President in 2007-2008.

My wife, Laura, works for the University of Kentucky in the Extension Service program within the College of Agriculture. I have two children Will, 25, who lives in Florida and works in sales for Porter Paint Group. Andrea, 18, will be a senior in High School and intends to major in Equine Management & Small Animal Science at the University of Kentucky upon graduation.

I would like to say that one of my greatest pleasures is assisting young people in experiencing success. As State Advisor to Virginia TSA, my ultimate goal in everything I do is to assist members of Virginia TSA in becoming successful in all of their life goals. Much learning takes place as you strive to apply your learning from the classroom to your competitive events and leadership activities. In TSA you will develop skills, not only in applying technology to designing solutions to problems, but you will develop skills that will carry you throughout your life, no matter what you endeavor to accomplish.

Andy Stephenson
2012 National Conference

TSA Nationals 2012- Gaylord Hotel Nashville, TN- As a TSA student, Nationals is the competition that I look forward to all year. This year’s National Competition in Nashville was not short of a success. The program this year was efficient and organized, and left some room for fun too! The Gaylord Hotel was great; it is by far the biggest hotel I’ve ever stayed in! While I only competed in two events and had plenty of free time, my friends competing in four or five had plenty of free time too to check out the mall across the street. From the first opening session to the closing session and awards ceremony on Wednesday, I was surprised at how efficient (and short!) the sessions ran. It was great to hear all of the Virginia schools at the awards ceremony. Way to go Virginia! It was a great week in Nashville and I definitely say it was one of the best nationals. Competitions and all I can’t wait for Nationals next year in Orlando, FL!

Adam Gambrel
Virginia TSA Sergeant at Arms

Photos provided by Jill Pritts
The enterprising committee is in charge of creating and compiling a list of items to sell at Technosphere. In previous years, we have included items such as water bottles, sunglasses, bumper stickers, and tote bags. As co-chairs of this committee- Molly Kirby and myself would love your input on what products to sell at the 2013 Technosphere. Feel free to email either Molly or myself at mkirbytsa@gmail.com or elizabeth.c.roller@gmail.com with any ideas or suggestions you might have.

Elizabeth Roller

See Your Pictures in the TSA Yearbook

As this years State Historian and this year I would like to make a digital yearbook for TSA. In order to do this, I need your help. I am requesting that you send in pictures of your fall rallies, regional fairs, this past years state and national conferences, and any other TSA functions you have participated in. The yearbook will be made in a PDF format so you will be able to upload the pictures or make a hard copy for yourself. In doing this, you will help me in making TSA’s very first yearbook.

If you have any pictures please send them to gretchenmae144@gmail.com

Thank you for your help,
Gretchen Gross
Oprah Winfrey said, “I don't think you ever stop giving. I really don't. I think it's an on-going process. And it's not just about being able to write a check. It's being able to touch somebody's life.” This applies to the State Community Service Project Committee’s goal for the year. Once again, Virginia TSA has adopted Relay for Life as its State Community Service Project. While our goal is to raise a significant amount of money to donate to the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life, participation in Relay for Life events, fundraisers, and the hard work behind the money collected is what is important. We want people to be rewarded by their efforts and see how much their fundraisers or volunteer work can help the people in the community. Therefore, as Virginia TSA, the State Community Service Project Committee encourages you to get started now. Start raising money. Start volunteering. Just start helping the people in your community. If you have any questions about Relay for Life, fundraising, or other service projects, email the State Community Service Project Committee Chair at sierracswisher@gmail.com anytime.
ATTENTION ALL WRITERS, JOURNALISTS, NOTE TAKERS, POETS, STORYTELLERS AND COLUMNISTS!

Get your pencils ready for this great opportunity! There is one thing this issue of the scene is missing, and that’s YOUR story! The Virginia TSA Executive Council wants to hear from you. So here’s the deal. Whenever you see your school, chapter, community, an individual, an advisor, or anyone else doing something awesome, write an article and send it in to mkirbytsa@gmail.com. The council will review them at the next meeting and, who knows, yours might show up in the next issue of the scene! Get writing!

Upcoming Events

Blue Ridge Region Fall Rally– September 15th-It went GREAT!
  Northern Region Fall Rally– November 10th
  South Central Region Fall Rally –October 13th
  Southwestern Region Fall Rally– October 18th
  Tidewater Region Fall Rally–October 13th
  Valley Region Fall Rally– October 13th

Deadline to register for Leadership Academy–October 18th

Virginia Scene Submissions Due– November 14th
  Leadership Academy– November 16-17
  Executive Council Meeting– November 18th

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!