**Eastern Section Report, 2020**

There really is not much to say about this year with the Eastern Section of NAGT. We were planning our annual meeting early in the year to take place in PA and in March all of that changed. If there is a positive that came out of that, during the weekend that our meeting would have taken place, several of our members set up a zoom meeting happy hour. It was attended by quit a few members and a good time was had by all.

Chris Roemmele will continue to plan for the 2021 section meeting in hope we can hold it. Callan Bentley continues to edit and publish our newsletter. Steve Lindberg has maintained our webpage that recently went through some changes. We have maintained a lot of communication through social media as well making use of our facebook page.

**The OEST award this year for the Eastern Section went to –**

**Bonnie J Keller**

Bonnie Keller started teaching Earth Science in 1993 after graduating from Old Dominion University. Several moves led her to teach in several school systems in Virginia, and a brief stint in New Hampshire. After obtaining her Master's in Science Education from Montana State University in 2010, she moved to Northern VA where she has been ever since. A long-time member of the ESPRIT list-serve for Earth Science teachers, Bonnie learned about the NY Earth Science Reference Tables from fellow members and adapted them for Virginia. She has been using them in her classroom ever since and has seen a positive impact on her students' understanding of Earth Science. If approved, she will be presenting these to the VA Association of Science Teachers yearly professional development meeting so that teachers across the state can see them and use them for their own classrooms. She is an active member online of several teacher-oriented discussion groups, as well as groups oriented towards Fossils, Minerals, and Environmental Science. Bonnie is currently the Vice President of the VA Earth Science Teachers Association and sits on the board for the VA Association of Science Teachers as the VESTA representative. In addition to teaching Earth Science, Bonnie is also a board member for the VA Herpetological Society and does live reptile programs. She currently teaches at Colgan High School in Prince William County, VA, where she has just finished her second year. She is looking forward to teaching both Earth Science and Oceanography next year. When she is not at school she is at home with her husband and son, along with 4 cats and a Pembroke Welsh Corgi.

Our State winners include:

**New York - Kevin Nohejl**

Kevin Nohejl is entering his 19th year teaching Earth Science at Shoreham Wading River High School. Kevin earned his bachelor's degree in Geology and Earth Science Education from Hofstra University, studying under Dr. J. Brett Bennington, the 2019 Neil Alden Miner Award recipient.

Kevin enjoys the challenges of bringing the dynamics of Earth's processes to a digestible level for early high school learners. He has implemented NGSS standards into his curriculum and has flipped his classroom to make it student centered and participant driven. In the Fall of 2019, Kevin's students participated in the Student Spaceflight Experiment Program (SSEP), a competition which allows student teams the opportunity to design a scientific experiment to be performed aboard the International Space Station.

In addition, Kevin's passion for agriculture and sustainable practices led him to develop curriculum for a Sustainability and Agriculture program. Drawing from his personal experiences, students are exposed to dynamics and intricacies of local and global sustainability and agricultural issues. To further enhance opportunities, Kevin has helped establish a local chapter of the New York State Future Farmers of America at Shoreham Wading River.

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters, meteorology, boating, gardening, and fixing anything that is broken. Kevin is truly honored and humbled to have been chosen for this award.

**Pennsylvania- Donna Kertis**

Donna Kertis has been teaching 8th grade Earth and Space Science at Twin Valley Middle School since 2006. She earned a B.S.Ed.in General Science and an M.S. in Geoscience from West Chester University, West Chester, PA. Donna enjoys helping her teenage students to reconnect with their childhood curiosity about the natural world, especially through hands-on scientific inquiry. She believes it is vital to be continuously mindful of her students' vastly different backgrounds, and the varying academic and personal development levels of her 8th graders. Donna shares her own enthusiasm for learning with her students, and frequently involves students in the topics she is engaged with herself. Recent examples include the study of nanotechnology, materials science, environmental geology, working with large data sets, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

**Virginia- Kristina Brody**

Kristina Bartlett Brody discovered geology 23 years ago when she worked at Geotimes magazine (1997-2003), then published by the American Geosciences Institute. Inspired, she earned a master's degree in geology at the University of Maryland (2007) and then worked as assistant managing editor at Science News magazine (2008-2010). After a career of writing and learning about earth science, Kristina decided to start teaching so that she could share the excitement of understanding planet Earth with young people. She has taught eight years, and currently teaches the Geosystems curriculum of Fairfax County Public Schools and the College Board A.P. Environmental Science curriculum to high school juniors and seniors at South County High School in Lorton, Va. She also taught science to exceptional education eighth graders, and geology to Northern Virginia Community College students. Kristina seeks to help students harness their creativity and inquiry skills. For example, students might go outside and measure tree heights on school grounds to consider carbon storage, and then debate various energy choices and their carbon footprints. Students also explore the Chesapeake Bay Watershed with field trips. In Kristina's classroom, students are challenged to be always reading, asking, writing, conversing, doing, and investigating. Her hope is that as adults, her students will have the tools to discern when science information is accurate.

Kristina also serves on a team that created lessons for connecting the AP Environmental Science Curriculum with the Fairfax County Public Schools Get2Green initiative. In 2017, she wrote a curriculum to supplement a citizen-scientists project led by researchers at George Mason University and the University of Massachusetts-Boston. She also sponsors the environmental club at her school and co-sponsors the Science Olympiad team. Kristina entered teaching focused on what she wanted her students to learn; but most rewarding is how much she has learned through the years from her students.

**West Virginia- Alicen Adkins**

Alicen Adkins is a 7th grade science teacher at Moorefield Middle School in Hardy County, WV where she has taught for 5 years. As a former Nuclear Medicine Technologist, she strives to make real-world connections with her science instruction and believes that STEM is for all students. She was named Moorefield Middle's 2019 Teacher of the Year, for which she has been nominated twice, and Fairmont State University's Student 2015 Teacher of the Year. She has been the recipient of Hardy County Teacher of the Month on multiple occasions, won the Golden Apple Award for educational excellence, and won the Spirit of Hardy County Award for educational impact twice. However, in her words, her biggest accomplishments are the opportunities she was worked to create for students to richly explore STEM including starting an award-winning FIRST Lego League Team, starting a Pulsar Search Collaboratory Club, creating a Family Science Night for the school/community which has been so successful it is now expanding to other schools, and creating an After-School STEM Club which will pilot this year and focus on student-led investigations such as rocketry and water quality. She credits her success with quality schooling, mentorship, and professional development opportunities such as ESS Passport, WVSTA, and serving as an instructor for WV Governor's STEM Institute.