

Hi John and students at Greensburg High!

Did you know that I grew up in New Kensington and graduated from Ken Hi in 1957?!!!

For kids interested in any branch of science (and kids in general) I'd say pay attention in science classes! Basic science in general gives us humans a background about our relationship to the universe around us! Find things that interest you and follow your interests. Try look for more information on line and in books. Wikipedia is usually a good online source for information, but it is always good to check 2 or 3 references to confirm the info. Ask lots of questions, not only to teachers (teachers love that!) but also to yourself!

For kids interested in astronomy, of course pay attention in math classes as well as science classes! My advisers when I was in high school (including some professional astronomers) said that the important thing is to start off with a good grounding in basic physics, so I majored in physics when I went to college at Penn State. Astronomy courses are good and often fun, but you can't jump into astronomy or planetary science without some basic background in physics! An interesting cross-over area in planetary science is biology, especially as we learn more about Mars. There are questions about origin of life on Earth, which get into molecular biology and chemistry --- and whether those same processes happened on early Mars, which had all the right "ingredients," including carbon-based molecules and at least some liquid water. Your generation is likely to discover the answer to whether we are the only life in the universe, (and the only self-aware intelligent life in the universe!)

I hope that as our nation recovers from the Covid pandemic, there will be more financial support for education, including college. I've had some experience at meetings and field work in Iceland, and I was interested to learn that if you grades are good enough to get you into college, you pay a registration fee but there are NO tuition fees after that, so that basic college education is covered by taxpayers (individuals and businesses) and is thus "free" to the college students. That system allows interesting careers and increases the education level of the whole country. (I think this is common also northern European countries.) So if Iceland can do it, maybe we can do it! So maybe you will be entering college at a good time, when costs of college education start coming down!

Best wishes to everybody in Greensburg!

Bill

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