

Messenger

Summerfield | WALDORF SCHOOL AND FARM

February 25, 2016

Volume 28, Issue 6

Circus Waldissima presents: "Ethos: The Art of Community"

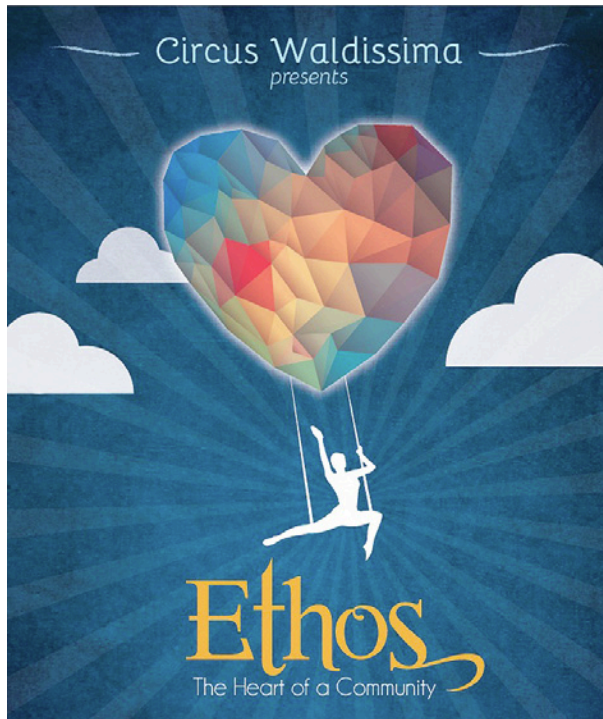
*Interview by Adam
MacKinnon, Editor*

The annual Circus Waldissima extravaganza is coming soon to our big-top circus tent. We took the chance to speak with circus teachers Don and Sieglinde Basmajian who gave their perspective on the role circus plays in a Waldorf education...

Why do we do circus?

Don: Circus is partly about doing hard things—things you didn't think you could do. What's wonderful is the social success circus creates, and the bonding within the class: I work with the children who are struggling and, when they get it and make a breakthrough, the whole class applauds.

We recognize that not everyone can be a super athlete, but the circus offers so much more than that. It's not easy for students who struggle with movement or fear the space around them. That's why we offer circus to all grades in the lower school. For every child, it's a time when they can play with being 'inside' and then moving out of themselves. In this way, they can meet the 'other'.



In the early grades they do a great deal of tumbling and floor work on the mat and, through those exercises, we see that some children come up against a 'wall'—they can't meet the other. For instance, something as simple as a roll is all about permeating the space beyond us. Even some third graders pull back too much—and, as a parallel, we may also see that their writing is cramped. The theory is: if I can change the way I relate to the space, I change the way I relate to the world.

Space is alive! In the times we live

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Circus Performances:

Advance tickets available in the Main Office and via Brownpapertickets.com.

Shows sell out quickly—purchase your tickets today! (Adults: \$15. Children and Seniors: \$8.)

Show times:

- Saturday, March 19 at 7pm
- Sunday, March 20 at 2pm

"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"

is this year's Youth Circus performance, thoughtfully planned by the Eighth Grade and featuring performances from all students grades three through eight.

This show takes place Saturday, March 19 at 2pm. Tickets are the same price and sell fast! You must have a ticket, even if your child is performing.

(Continued from Page One)

in, with the amount of intellectuality and the technology around us, we are too close to ourselves. When we can permeate the space around ourselves, we have the possibility to have a different soul experience. We can have a deeper experience of the world and not be so self-absorbed.

Did Steiner mention circus in his lectures?

Don: Steiner notably said: “Sport is Darwinism applied!” and thus there was no physical education in the early years of the Waldorf movement. But then he observed that the children needed something else. He went to Fritz von Bothmer who came up with the eponymous Bothmer gymnastic exercises. Jamien McMillan took these exercises to another level in developing Spatial Dynamics. This informs the movement work in many Waldorf schools.

Sieglinde: In Germany, Waldorf schools almost always have a circus but, more and more, American Waldorf schools are now developing their own circus programs, having seen the benefits. Movement teachers often take up leading the circus, as many circus arts offer excellent opportunities for brain and body task integration and mastering spatial dynamics.

Can you say something about how confidence is engendered in students through circus?

Don: As parents we want to keep the children safe. In the circus we bring them to a place where they have to take a step beyond what they’re used to doing. But we recognize the difference between fear and courage; they are both movements. Fear is a movement where we live too close to ourselves. Courage is a step where we are able to take a movement towards the end of our space.

Teenagers are so drawn into themselves. When they can let go and move out, there’s a breathing that takes place, between being too far inside and too far outside. They’re so locked in they will find other ways to burst out. In many cultures, rites of passage involving risk-taking are a necessary step for adolescents to become young adults. Circus is a way to go outside themselves that’s safe.

How does circus offer something different from eurythmy as a movement education?

Don: We’ve seen how circus is a great way for children to work together socially. They have to have trust in each other: in performances we often have situations with students standing on the shoulders of another as part of an act. For instance, eighth graders also work with a specific trust exercise of falling and being caught. The ego lives in front of us: it’s really important that they have this experience of falling into space. The ‘catch’ is important to demonstrate that you don’t go too far.

So, in a broad sense, circus is about allowing all students a chance to extend themselves safely out into the world. And making sure students know we provide a ‘net’ for them. For the students that really commit to our circus program, what do they gain?

Don: The committed students get the chance to specialize. So, we have a lot of students developing skills as aerialistas, acrobats, and trampolinists. And, of course, we’ve had quite a number of kids go on and make careers out of it.

But it also offers opportunities for individuals to stretch themselves in new areas: eighth graders take on the planning and direction of the LS show each year, meeting every week from November on, to create a theme and help run classes. We often see some of

CIRCUS ALUM RETURNS!



One of the guest performers for the March circus is Robert Bochmann who was here three years ago as an exchange student in our High School, and wowed audiences with his juggling skills, and his wonderful calm and generous stage presence.

He now teaches circus at his school in Germany, Freie Waldorfschule Rengoldshausen am Bodensee (the same school that our own Sieglinde attended!), and performs professionally with a group he created with a juggling friend.

He’s excited to return to Summerfield and share his skills. His twelfth grade project at his school in Germany was all about mastering the skill of juggling clubs that light up. And he’ll perform that act for us in this show!

the quieter students take on leadership roles.

Sieglinde: Circus also reaches through the grades to pull the students together across the ages. The mentoring that happens as the older students support the younger students is really wonderful. While preparing for a show, high schoolers do the children’s make-up and hair, and later the high schoolers do the backstage work. The younger students feel so special to have the attention of the older students, and the high schoolers feel very empowered.

Festival of the Arts FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Waldorf parents are very aware of the integral place the arts hold in their child's education, infusing much of what takes place in the classroom. But the parents rarely get to step inside those classrooms and see how the curriculum is taught. That's why Summerfield decided to create this special annual event, the Festival of the Arts.

It's so wonderful to get to see the collection of arts and crafts work from our Practical Arts classes, which receive pride-of-place at the entrance to this Festival, displayed to beautiful effect outside Sophia Hall.

And, inside the Hall, once the performance part of the afternoon begins at 1pm, parents get to watch selections from grades two through eight that represent the music, eurythmy, singing, performance, experiments, and group collaborations that exemplify an education of warmth, humor, and abundant creativity.

Parents are invited to join us on **Friday, March 11 at 12:30pm for the Arts & Crafts Display and at 1pm for the Second through Eighth Grade Performances at Sophia Hall.**

And please keep in mind the limited parking here at school, so plan on carpooling as much as possible (or ride your bike!)

~ *Andrea Jolicoeur, LS Secretary*



'CARDINAL' IN PASTELS, BY GAVIN, EIGHTH GRADE

Playing for Summerfield

By Lily Buller, Tenth Grader

I have played basketball for seven seasons now. I started in fourth grade on a CYO team, which is a program open to boys and girls from third to eighth grade. In sixth grade, I, along with a handful of my classmates, played up on the seventh grade girls team here at Summerfield. We helped win the MSSL (Middle School Sports League) championship that year, and the next year, undefeated, we claimed the title again. In eighth grade, we got the chance to work with younger girls, just like the older ones did for us when we were in sixth grade.

In ninth grade, I played on the JV team—the High School had enough girls interested in playing that year that we could field two teams! This year was my first year on the varsity team. Both years have been amazing experiences with brilliant coaches.

I love basketball for many reasons. I love it because it is a team sport. Yes, an individual can affect the game, but last time I checked you can't inbound the ball to yourself. Also, every move you make is to help your team—to help someone get that shot, that layup, that drive... this game is about teamwork. I like striving to improve my game, always getting better. In every game I feel I improve, learning something new from the time the beginning whistle blows for the jump ball, until the buzzer goes off at the end. And I love the feeling after you block a ball in someone's face, or score a basket, get an assist, or whatever! It's just all so much fun!



FROM L-R: CALEB HAYE (WITH DAUGHTER KALEA), MARI STUSSER, SOPHIA NIELSON, VIRGINIA WINTER, DAHNIA CAMPOS, LILY BULLER, VIOLET RICHMOND, MORGAIN LEOPARD, MIKE CARROLL
NOT PICTURED: MARIAH LANPHAR, ISABELLE DEAN, NORA MILLER-FITZPATRICK, EMILE BURNHORN

The Girls' High School team is like my second family, and I'm sure I don't speak for just myself when I say we are honored to represent Summerfield and its sports program. Every game we play, whether home or away, we try to leave a good impression on our opponents. We try to be good sports and have the others leave with a good feeling. After all, a good game isn't determined by who wins or loses, but by whether or not one works hard to make it fun and gratifying to oneself, as well as everyone having fun in the process.

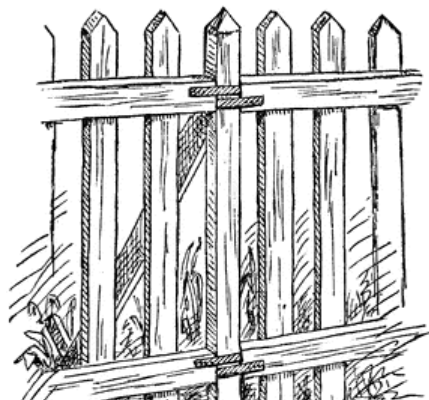
Our season this year has been a great one. We had such a wonderful time, and made it to the championships last week to come in second in our league, the Small School Bridge League. We couldn't have done it without our coaches, Mike Carroll and Caleb Haye, and we are so grateful that they spend their time helping us to improve our game. We are looking forward to next season, when we can improve even more. Go Mustangs!

Turning Towards Spring on Summerfield Farm

By Farmer Dan

Just now, on and around Summerfield farm, there are an assorted collection of fruit trees, bushes and wildflowers turning various shades of purple and violet after recent invigorating rains, reminding me of the poet Alice Walker who put it so sweetly, “I think it (annoys God) if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don’t notice it.” And after a challenging winter, this season of spring renewal is especially welcome for our little and big student farmers as they bundle up and head off to their farming and gardening classes to be nurtured by what the earth has to offer. Alice Walker also wrote, “As long as the Earth can make a spring every year, I can. As long as the earth can flower and produce nurturing fruit, I can, because I am the Earth. I won’t give up until the Earth gives up.”

Now that all the commotion of installing the new mounds for the enlarged septic system is a distant fall memory, the approach to the garden spaces has been reseeded and the rains have stimulated a verdant new carpet of fresh grass on the approach path as well as on top of the long, two foot high mounds that stretch across the old sheep pasture. New fencing and gates have helped



spruce up the cow and sheep pens as well, as we adjust to our altered space. Three cows, mama May (due again in May) with two-year-old son Jupiter and one-year-old daughter Lara June adorn the pastures, as well as the shaggy menagerie of sheep due for their March shearing. No lambs have been born just yet, but hopefully within the next couple of weeks. And the chicken tractors have begun rolling out onto fresh hillocks of newly greened grass, much to the delight of the chickens after being cooped up for a couple of months.

There still are several varieties of winter squash, onions, various greens, fresh eggs, and yogurt available at the farm stand as we look towards an abundance of the nutritional spring greens that have been seeded in the greenhouse. A new addition is the tasty new asparagus that, after three patient years of preparation, is just now becoming available for sale as well. The kindergardeners, first and second graders have all been busy during the winter months shelling corn for the cornmeal that makes delicious muffins and polenta, and the last of the Hutterite beans are being shelled as we look towards special needs for our annual Farm to Feast fundraiser and auction in the farmyard come May.

Also during the winter, a large oak that fell and crunched a car (fortunately no one was hurt), as well as a towering Eucalyptus that was felled near the Kindergardens have been loaded and transported by the sixth and seventh graders (with some assistance from Farmer Dana) over to the farm pastures to be split



up for firewood. The amazingly capable seventh graders have been lending their strong and willing muscles to split clean, fragrant piles of the wood into neat piles that the Kindergardeners then haul in little caravans over to the wood rack where it will dry over the summer to be used for the brick oven cooking projects as well as for events where bonfires are called for, i.e. Sprites Night and Winter Faire. So we are richly blessed to have hearty work for the students to participate in that helps our school and farm thrive in healthy ways.

Finally, all the fruit trees on the farm, apples, peaches, plum, fig, and pear have been pruned and, again, the Kindergardeners industriously gathered up the branches to haul to the brush piles, with a few lucky children perched on top of the overflowing carts to hold down the branches that are usually loaded to the brim. The seed orders are due this week, so seeding the flowers for the student gardens and turning over the beds is coming right up for the sixth graders, as well as mulching and freshening up the replanted raspberry patch. The third graders are finishing up their birdhouse-making projects before returning to the farm to paste the apple trees with their Biodynamic dressing and to prepare for the massive spring plantings of corn, onions, potatoes, winter squash and pumpkins, while the fourth graders return to continue cleaning up the animal pens, pruning

the roses along the farm fields, and bracing themselves for the semi-annual mucking out of the barns to feed the manure into our massive compost piles out on the farm. So, yes, we remain quite busy and, for the most part, out of mischief.

In closing, a personal note as some readers may have noticed the Farm column was absent from the last issue of the Messenger. Seems I was late returning from the holidays as, while visiting my family in Minnesota over Christmas, my older brother, Steve, died suddenly on the morning of December 22nd after falling headfirst, i.e. perfectly wrong, while carrying a bicycle down the basement stairs in his farmhouse. He was in perfect health and excellent spirits so in a sense it was a clean exit from this life, however painful it was for those left to mourn his crossing over. Being inbetween two brothers (with a younger sister), and noting that Steve lived through the Kennedy years while serving a tour of duty in Vietnam, I am taking the liberty to close with a passage that Teddy Kennedy spoke at his brother Robert's funeral that applies to my brother who inspired a turnout of over 300 friends to attend his funeral in a tiny rural church in the snowy farm fields of northern Minnesota: "My brother need not be idealized or enlarged in death beyond what he was in life, but rather be remembered as a good and decent man... Who when he saw wrong tried to right it... Who saw suffering and tried to heal it... And who, at such a young age, saw war and tried to do his part to end it." He was a very good brother and will be missed.

Meanwhile, the soft pebbles of rain here are falling on the greening hills of Sonoma County and there is work to be done and students to corral.

Spring blessings from Summerfield, Farmer Dan

Partnership with Sheppard Elementary

Summerfield enjoys a fruitful partnership with the Sheppard Elementary School in the Roseland area of south Santa Rosa, with Summerfield students gaining invaluable experience mentoring and working side-by-side on projects establishing a thriving garden at Sheppard and hosting their students on visits to the Summerfield farm. Sheppard Elementary Teacher Kerry Arredondo wrote to us to describe the impact of the program on her second grade students.

Dear Summerfield Waldorf Community,

I would like to thank you for your continued support of our partnership. Our small garden is tucked behind our middle school, with vegetable beds, fruit trees, and an outdoor classroom area. My students go to the garden weekly to focus on nutrition, science, math, reading and gardening skills.

Our partnership with Summerfield began in 2010, with materials provided for the garden, including rain boots, plants, seeds and gardeners to consult. Most importantly, we have had the pleasure of having Summerfield students helping in upkeep, supporting learning centers in the garden that integrate math, science, reading and nutrition, and working with students who need a little extra attention and English exposure. Summerfield students are role models who support and inspire my students with their learning in the garden as well as in my classroom.

One of the fondest memories that I have is last year on a project day where I observed the students playing tag at lunch time and then, at the end of the day, all of the students were hugging each other goodbye, saying "This was the best day ever!" When my students read their animal reports to their parents at our Open House, they shared the names of the Summerfield students who helped them to research. A student



who was tutored by a Summerfield senior checks in regularly about how his tutor is doing in



college. Lasting impressions have been made.

This school year has been successful as well; both in helping with the garden and a group of three Summerfield students who have been coming two days a week. Their kindness and flexibility with the diverse needs of my class has been greatly appreciated.

I am looking forward to these students participating in an upcoming project day in the garden and helping with second grade research projects. We will hook up our sink that was made by past Summerfield students, making a vegetable- and hand-washing station for our nutrition center. With [Summerfield teacher] Ronni Sands' help we will have the pleasure of visiting Summerfield school for a field trip. Past students remember this trip fondly; in fact, a former student was recently talking about collecting eggs, and that was the first time he understood where an egg really came from.

Having our partnership has given my students and families an opportunity to see outside our Roseland enclave, and provides a cooperative learning environment that is not only in the classroom but also in the garden. Thank you for your continued support and willingness to share your resources with donations, knowledge, and fabulous students.

Sincerely,
Kerry Arredondo

WALDORF AT WEILL

By Cynthia Albers,
HS Orchestra Director

On January 27 the High School Orchestra represented Summerfield at the annual Waldorf at Weill event, a showcase for the music programs of all nine North Bay Waldorf schools, held at the acclaimed Weill Hall at the Green Music Center.

Our 20-piece orchestra of strings and woodwinds, performing a segment of *Suite Luna de Miel* by Virgil Barstad, was given the honored position of closing the event, and was showered with audience appreciation.



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Parent of Rachel 6th Grade



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20-50% of "sails" from the store go to Summerfield.

The Messenger Marketplace

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Classes/Camps/Events

Coming of Age Circle for Girls Starting this Spring! March–May 2016

Every girl should have access to mentors and other women to understand what it means to be a woman in today's world. Through coming of age circles, girls feel supported and welcomed into the larger community with a fuller understanding of their true power. Girls ages 8 -11 are invited to attend. Age range is flexible depending on maturity level. We will be meeting once a week for 12 weeks from 3:30-6 p.m. in Sebastopol. Day of the week and exact location to be determined. Cost is \$360, (\$30 per week). We highly encourage girls attend all 12 weeks. Payment for 12 weeks must be paid in full 1st week.

Over the 12 weeks, girls will walk away feeling a stronger sense of who they are, be able to identify their true gifts, feel connected to their bodies, be able to tap into their inner power and have a deeper connection to the natural world. Themes for the 12 weeks:

- Gratitude and intention
- Seasonal Placed based learning
- Relationships and Sisterhood
- Peacemaking; how to communicate from the heart; introduction to council
- Body Wisdom; tapping into inner wisdom
- Self-care and self-love practices
- Speaking truth and expressing emotions
- Inner power and self confidence
- Identifying gifts and talents
- Art of stories
- Tracking
- Life visioning and manifesting

Other activities include: Singing, dancing, hand crafts, nature games, plant medicine-making, identifying power animals, moon cycles, story-telling, alter/mandala creation and much more! Mothers will be invited to celebrate with their daughters at the end of the 12 weeks! Curriculum covered in the girls group will offer a solid foundation for a week-long coming of age over-night nature camp in Sebastopol this June. Stay tuned for more details! For more information and to register, please go to wildwisdomways.com. Call (707) 861-1182 or email: girlscomingofage@gmail.com or Nicorease@gmail.com.

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Services

Singing and Piano Instruction with Mary Beard

I am an experienced teacher, a Summerfield Waldorf founding parent and original creator of the school's instrument music program. My studio is located in Santa Rosa. Please visit my website marybeardmusicstudio.com. Contact me at marymezzo@sonic.net or 707-546-8782.

Now Accepting New Clients in Sebastopol!

Allie A. McCann, MFT, ATR-BC (mccannmft@gmail.com, 707.219.8484). Allie is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Art Therapist. She is a Waldorf-inspired mother of two and is sympathetic and supportive of Waldorf-inspired values and lifestyle choices. She supports children, adolescents, parents and adults, specializing in anxiety, mood, behavioral and relational issues, life transitions, and grief and loss. Allie has a holistic view of health, tending to mind, body, and spirit. She incorporates both art and a connection with the natural world into her healing practices.



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The 3rd Grade Shelter Project



JUST SOME OF THE MANY WONDERFUL MODELS BY THIRD GRADERS FROM THEIR RECENT SHELTER BLOCK.
PHOTOS BY COLLEEN WIMMER