

Messenger

Summerfield | WALDORF SCHOOL AND FARM

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Festival of Light

By Adam MacKinnon, Editor

The Festival of Light began at Summerfield in 2010, arising out of the initiative of one particular student, Rose Triest. She felt that the school's two significant celebration events in the holiday season, namely Santa Lucia Day and the Shepherds' Play, did not offer enough diversity. Rose voiced her concern to her mentor, and then met with faculty to present a proposal. The result was the Festival of Light, a series of weekly gatherings Monday mornings in December for all students from grades one to twelve, with a circle of candles and singing of songs from all faiths to celebrate light.

The eleventh graders plan and hold the Festival, bringing stories and songs on successive Mondays to celebrate Advent, Hanukkah and, for the third Monday, a choice from the class. The first year, this was a Chinese tale. This year, there was a Native American celebration, with the story of *How the Hummingbird Got His Red Throat* and a beautiful song, *The Eagle*. Sometimes the eleventh graders suggest a story they like; other times it is something Eurhythmy teacher Skeydrit Bähr has discovered earlier in the year. Volunteers from the eleventh grade step forward to tell the story, hopefully from memory. The Festival forms a complement to the study of comparative religion, brought by teacher Rick Concoff in the eleventh grade.

The songs and tales take place in Sophia



Hall—all the students sit in concentric circles inside a larger circle of lighted candles held by the eleventh graders. And in the center of the circle, this year, there is a beautiful 'butter-lamp' that was presented to the school during last year's trip to Bhutan. The first graders are involved, too, and sit enraptured alongside their Senior buddies. At the end, the students are asked to hold a perfect silence all the way to their classrooms... and retain, for as long as possible, the feeling of calm and beauty that this festival engenders.

In the year that master storyteller Ashley Ramsden visited the school and taught classes in the art of storytelling, Skeydrit reports that a huge impression was made on the students, and it was reflected with especially strong energy and vigor to the tales.

The initiative also led to a shift with the Shepherds' Play, which was originally performed just by teachers, but now involves senior students as well.

Skeydrit sees the Festival of Light as an important way in which the school celebrates diversity, and she is ever-grateful to Rose for her energy and commitment to create something so beautiful for the whole community to enjoy.

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Important Dates:

Shepherds' Play

Friday, Dec 18, 6pm, in Sophia Hall

7th Annual Alumni Event

Friday, Dec 26, 3:30-6pm, in Sophia Hall

Epiphany Bonfire

Wednesday, Jan 6, 5:30-7pm

Walk through the Grades, Campus Tour

Wednesday, Jan 13, 9am, Sophia Hall

Pizza Sign-up!

Sign up now for the Winter/Spring Lower School Pizza Session (for second through eighth grade)!

This is a fundraiser for the Senior class of 2016, providing pizzas for Wednesday lunches, Jan 6–Jun 8, 2016. Sign-up forms were given to each student (and are online here), and return asap to class envelopes or to Amelia in the HS office.

Advent Thoughts

By Don Basmajian, Third Grade Teacher

In Paradise I did dwell.
God's light shone and all was well.
Sweet red apples hung from a tree.
I tasted one. It was just for me.

I must choose evil or good
In every deed it's understood...



ADVENT CANDLE PAINTING BY DAISY FEINSTEIN

As the darkness of winter approaches, it seems as if the stars not only shine brighter, but they begin to whisper cosmic secrets. The stars speak in a language that only the heart can hear. Open hearts not only listen to spiritual wisdom but also melt the walls that separate us from each other.

The Advent Garden is a sacred space in which we are able to open the doors of our hearts. As I watched the third grade children carry their apples, I could sense that the apple took on a new meaning for them. I was deeply moved by the courage of these nine-year-old children as they took up their misdeeds represented by the apple and walked through the darkness to rekindle the light in their lives. It was a powerful experience for their teacher and, as I watched, I was humbled by the beauty each child radiated as they carried the light in their hands.

As the families sat in awe, I imagined people who have built walls to keep each other out—Republicans and Democrats, blacks and whites, Muslims and Christians, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors, and you and I watching each other courageously striving for the light that unites us all.

If hearts could open even for just a moment, perhaps walls might come tumbling down and fear would no longer find a home!

The Oberufer Shepherds' Play

Friday, December 18, 6pm, Sophia Hall

In appreciation for your dedicated support through the year, Summerfield faculty cordially invites you to enjoy the free annual community performance of *The Oberufer Shepherds' Play*. This play originated on the island of Oberufer in Austria. The inhabitants performed it annually, preserving and passing it on from generation to generation as a sacred treasure. Performances were traditionally given in country inns, and players as well as spectators entered the establishment in a heartfelt Christmas mood. The play alternates scenes of devotion with ones of coarse rural humor. It presents a picture of the Holy Child's birth, but the images could apply to us all.

Students will see the play during the school day, but everyone is welcome to attend the free evening performance. The play is a lot of fun and quite touching, and the content is appropriate for all ages. Summerfield faculty and high school students have been practicing this play for the past two months to present it to our community. The audience will be able to enjoy guessing, as do the students, which teachers and students play which characters in the cast.

Eat first at home, then please come to see our play and join us in holiday celebration on Friday, December 18, at 6pm in Sophia Hall. There will be a tea-and-cookie reception following the performance. Please bring easy-to-eat cookies to share (nothing involving a plate!). We are looking for a parent coordinator to organize set-up and clean-up. Contact Tracy to volunteer: tracy@summerfieldwaldorf.org

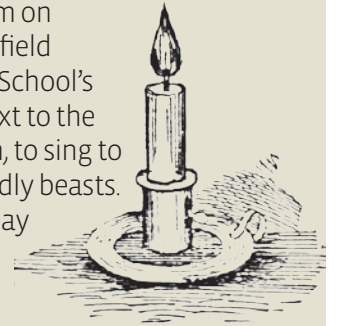
The Night Before Christmas

On a cold and starry night long ago the simple beasts created a space in their stable so that the Spirit Child could be born and placed in a manger. If people of modern times can open their hearts on this Holy Night, the child of love will be born anew.

You are welcome to join us on Christmas Eve, December

24, at 5pm on Summerfield Waldorf School's Farm, next to the Red Barn, to sing to the friendly beasts.

Adults may bring a candle to hold while we sing to the animals and listen to a story.



We will not have a potluck as in the past so we will be finished no later than 6pm. For safety reasons, please keep your children with you at all times during this event.

~ Don & Sieglinde Basmajian



Fourth Graders Celebrate Las Posadas

By Sra. Marcela, LS Spanish teacher

Did you see “el sol” (sun) or “la luna” (moon) walking next to Mother Mary and Father Joseph today [Thursday, December 17] at school? Did you hear the “carpinteros” (carpenters) sewing wood, the “pastorcitos” (young shepherds) calling for their “ovejitas” (little sheep)? Were you wondering if you were the elements, or animals, or students? Not to worry, you were not day-dreaming! Today the fourth grade celebrated “Las Posadas.”



Las Posadas is a lovely celebration originating in Spain and quite popular in many places around Latin America. The celebration is known as “La Novena de Aguinaldos” in Colombia; “Romerias” and “Gaitas” in Venezuela; and “Las Parrandas” in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Posada is the Spanish word for lodging. We say it in plural because the festival is celebrated over nine days. The actors in Las Posadas represent mother Mary and father Joseph in their search for shelter. They were accompanied only by the harsh elements and a couple of animals, in a world that was quite busy and convoluted. They strove to cultivate compassion, and to share the light that was approaching humanity.

During the fourth grade’s Las Posadas celebration, we paraded throughout the school singing and sharing our own light. After knocking at so many “inns”, i.e. classrooms, and seriously starting to worry that no one was going to open the door, we took a moment to pause and reflect about those who face hard situations before trying one more time. Finally, success! In the least expected place we found a loving class, quietly waiting, and willing to welcome us in and warm our bellies and hearts.

In addition to their shelter-seeking journey, the fourth graders shared Advent songs in Spanish with the community, and, most importantly, helped others to stop for a moment to think about compassion, and what it means to quiet oneself in order to listen without ears and look without eyes.

Lastly, a true “Posada” would not be complete without a “piñata” or two after recovering from this “largo, long journey.” In the days before the “Posada”, the fourth graders had the opportunity to prepare their crowns with symbols for the characters that they were going to represent, and prepared little surprises for their classmates. They used these surprises to stuff their own “piñata.” They also made fun predictions about what I was going to put in the one that I prepared for them. It was lovely to see the children, through the days of preparation, secretly filling their own “piñata” with notes containing messages, verses, riddles, a joke or two. Some students included some of their little treasures from previous parties or gifts, and there was even a kind child who brought little containers of hand-made play dough!!!

The “arboles” (trees) are quiet now, “el viento” (the wind) is resting after so much dancing, and there is a “estrella” (star) shining for all of us!

Feliz Navidad! Feliz Hanukah! Feliz Solsticio! Paz en la tierra y a los hombres de buena voluntad!

Epiphany Bonfire

Wednesday,
Jan 6, 5:30-7pm

RAIN OR NON-BURN
DAY CANCELS

Epiphany is nearing! Bring your Christmas trees to burn in an awe-inspiring bonfire, partake in eating baked potatoes and Three-Kings Cake, drink hot apple cider, and spend time with friends! Whoever finds the golden coin in their slice of cake becomes a king for the year!

Though the baked potatoes will be provided, **we ask for donated potato toppings** (green onions, sour cream, butter, salsa, etc.) **and warm apple cider. We’re also looking for bakers to bring cake!** Please go to www.summerfieldwaldorf.org > Events > Epiphany Bonfire to sign-up. You may also simply email Andrea Trinei, andrea@summerfieldwaldorf.org, with what you plan to bring. Andrea: “In the past no one volunteered to bring cake, so there was no cake. I am hoping that generous souls will make themselves known this year and we will all eat cake!”

Bring your own plates & utensils, and please note: trees will not be accepted into the blaze after 6:30pm, so come early!



Eucalyptus Tree

Last month we reported the loss of a live oak by our exit road.

A eucalyptus next to Aftercare/Red Rose was also lost recently. We had been monitoring the tree closely with our arborist, and noted three inches of movement since the instrument sheds went up next to it a couple of years ago. It was decided for safety reasons that the tree had to be taken down.

~Ignacio Garat, Business Manager, for Grounds and on behalf of Governance Council

A Class in Auto-Mechanics!

By Adam MacKinnon, Editor

This fall, Summerfield offered HS students the chance to take a class in Auto-Mechanics. I was curious to learn what the class involved and how it fitted into the Waldorf curriculum, and so spoke with teacher Konstantin Gortinsky...

This was a new elective class. Which students took it, and how did this class originate?

The impetus came from requests by students to learn some basic things about cars, and the faculty liked the suggestion since it meets the need for students to have a better control of the life and physical surroundings they are born into. Permaculture teacher Ronni Sands also had had some students come to her last year asking how to do various things around the house that they didn't know how to do.

Part of our job as teachers is to provide students with the skills to exist in this world with confidence—so a class like this is about empowerment. And also a chance to look at the world with fresh eyes: to recognize what are the things around them they might have no connection with, but which they depend on. This enables them to see those things with more depth; to have more of an understanding of what's really going on with the things they use.

The class was mostly tenth and eleventh graders, the majority of whom were drivers, but four were not.

How does a class like this fit into the pedagogy?

Since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, machines just replaced or enhanced something we were doing by hand... in other words, people still had the relationship in their bodies to the function being performed or assisted by the machine.



But the more developed machines have become, and, especially, the more hidden the mechanics inside them, the more we started to lose contact with that “something” that was performing the function for us. They become almost like magical things that surround us, and that's enough for us. There's no relationship between us and them.

The students ask this question precisely because they're missing that. In the same way, this is the reason why they love to plant, because they're missing seeing how the food comes that they get in the store.

So why the Car?

A car is still a mechanical thing. It's still connected to your body. You have to make movements in your body to make it go. But it has become a highly complex machine.

How did you structure the class?

Well, we begun with some history as a way to gain a new perspective on the car... We looked at various modes of transportation and how they worked. We talked about the properties of them, for instance, the horse. It was a living thing, and we are living, so we could understand what its needs were. If it was hungry, we could feed it. If cold, we could cover it. If its feet were sore, we could give it new shoes.

But when we moved to machines, we began to lose that essential connection. Somehow we needed to find a way to remind us that the thing was hungry, or weary, or needed new tires. At the start, those things didn't exist. Then people started adding gauges... and so it became more indirect.

We talked about how early cars were quite simple, even if they seemed miraculous. With a bit of effort we could manage it. This was brought to students as an illustration of how something



begins simply and then becomes quite sophisticated.

But we still have ears, and we still rely on certain information that's beyond the scope of a computer. Often times the computer will only signal when something is too far gone. A mechanic can still listen to a car and hear information that is quite subtle: squeaks, little clicks and clacks. And so we practiced those skills, listening for clues as the various engines of our cars ran.

And those clues are just like it used to be with a horse: if it farts too much, you know you gave it too much grain! (The students loved that analogy!)

A sensory-based class, then!

Yes, just as with our practical arts classes, we're trying to engage all the senses. Students learned how important the sense of smell was too, as well as that of hearing. They smelled the various fluids going into the engine.

I'm curious how a class like this fits into the progression of machines students study through the grades...?

Well, they encounter the sewing machine in eighth grade handwork (along with their first study of the Industrial Revolution), and the loom is brought in tenth grade as a chance for them to experience real craftsmanship. Of course, technology is also brought in different ways through electronics, circuitry, and the history of mechanics in physics, and binary systems and computing in HS math. But for this class, we talked in more abstract terms about machines. For instance, our discussions of the history touched on how we used to know everything about the process of making something... because we dealt with it all the way along. First we knew all the pieces, but now we know none.



Because we only have partial information now, there is thus no way we can extrapolate and see where else this invention can go. Unless you understand and have a connection to all the parts, it's very difficult to use them or take them to a new level.

That sounds like Waldorf education's emphasis on seeking to educate from the parts to the whole... ?

Exactly... though Waldorf also goes from the whole to the parts when it's more appropriate—we like to go both ways! While we may not be producing the inventors of the future, we are at least providing the tools, the capacity, if you like, for these students to understand more deeply and be capable of thinking more creatively about what the world will need.

I understand generous donations of vehicles were made. What did the students do, hands-on, with the cars?

We were given two vehicles by parents in the community: both were running but very poorly. And two boys brought cars in of their own, one of which wouldn't start. So we had lots to work with. Students listened carefully to the engines. In groups, they performed various functions: one group would jack a car up ... which they discovered was far more complicated than they expected but they learnt by trial and error. It was quite an eye-opener just to discover where



precisely you put the jack, how you remove the wheel, and so on.

They looked at the fuel-pump... and tried to figure out how it worked. I asked them how they might check that the electricity was getting to it? Eventually they found a way. I realized that it was a struggle for them to communicate well with each other and be silent enough to listen to the clicks.

The students began by orienting themselves, figuring out which parts were which, following the different lines in the cars to see where fluids travelled. They saw how things were connected. They checked the levels of everything. They compared the smells of one thing and another. Little by little, they explored. And they even began, slowly, to overcome their aversion to looking at the manual. It was an educational experience, in itself, for them to see their teacher depend on the manual, and to hear that even mechanics have to use them!

We got into the process of trouble-shooting. When the key is turned on... does the engine start? If yes, then what does the engine need to run? Gas, air, its own electricity. Then find out which one of those seems to be the problem. For many students, trouble-shooting was a new, and much-needed, skill. It's something that comes from a willingness to engage, to be hands-on... and it's fast disappearing. They spend so much time on their devices, that they're becoming too used to getting an instant response. They're not doing enough work to get the answer. Getting them used to doing things, step-by-step, often through trial and error, is the route to effective trouble-shooting.

Shouldn't our students have a big advantage in this area, with all their background in the practical arts?

Yes, but still they struggle with it. Children used to have to work all the time in the house. They were sweeping, helping in the kitchen, etc. They had to make judgments all the time. You begin to understand the world you fit in, and you begin to understand how to work with it, which is where the skill of trouble-shooting comes from. We keep them children for a long time here, and protect them in certain areas where they actually need to do more.

I had a student in this class who spent summers fishing with his father in Alaska. He arrived here in 9th grade. This child didn't need to be told anything. He was the one who saw what needed to happen and did it automatically. He had learned to do those things through the manner of how he grew up. One occasion stood out for me: I picked up a bench that needed to be moved... essentially making the gesture of asking for help for someone to pick up the other end. He was the student that did.



Do you feel the class was a success?

I'm still reflecting on that question. For some students, there was a definite sense of accomplishment. The car that wouldn't start was fixed, and the boy was able to drive it home, a big success for everyone. Another student is rebuilding an old MG, which wasn't running at all. It's so old that there's no manual for it. It took a very long time to make progress—they had to time the distributor, and place the spark-plugs properly, and then time them to the engine. It gave them all a deeper understanding of how the engine operates. And they did manage to get the engine to run, quite an achievement.

Another student wanted to change the shocks on his car. I was very reluctant to do it: you have to compress springs that have great force. We took the strut out, and I did the hardest part of the compression, but they all saw the process, cringing in the background! The student was very happy to get it done, but realized it was something he didn't have the skills to do it himself.

As an overall experience, even the fact of showing the students this complex machine, and helping them find enough courage to dare to open it up, and the willingness to see what's inside it, is very helpful. However much or little they learned, they all at least took away that, an important step in itself.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace ... Year's End on Summerfield Farm

By Farmer Dan

CHALKBOARD DRAWING BY KIBBY MACKINNON



During the dark, wintry days of December growing up in Minnesota as a child, one of my favorite

biblical images was from the beginning of John's gospel that addressed and confronted the darkness simply and conclusively with the beautiful assertion that: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." A simple beeswax candle alight on my table reminds me of that passage as the rain falls and the flame flickers in the late night breeze that slips in while the cat silently slips out. In addition to reverence, in our household there always was just the right touch of playful irreverence, a question of balance that my mother kept with simple observations like: "A virgin birth I can believe, but finding three wise men?" ... spoken with a twinkle in her eye to her three growing sons.

Lately, as the year winds down on Summerfield farm, the classes have been helping to gather lots of stuff for our insatiable compost piles—most recently all the leaves from the huge Walnut tree in the center of the farmyard (that not only provides leaves for compost, but also shade for Farm-to-Feasters, branches to hang swings from for so many playful students, and a memory canopy for graduating Seniors to

reminisce under as they have their Farewell Tea with their classmates and teachers in early June). Compost is such an integral part of Biodynamic farms, feeding the entire farm organism wisely, so every class helps gather food scraps, leaves, cow/sheep/chicken manure, weeds and any other organic matter that is generated from our own fields and gardens and classrooms and animals. And what is returned to us always seems miraculous; even a bit humbling to the farmer, as the poet Rumi reminds us:

The ground's generosity takes in our compost
and grows beauty.

Try to be more like the ground.

Give back better, as rough clods return
an ear of corn, a tassel, a barley awn,
this sleek handful of oats.

Out in "implement alley" on the southern edge of the farm property, where the farm machinery waits its turn to dress the fields and we await the newly conceived Art/Tech building, wooden stools are taking shape by creative eighth graders under the watchful eye of master craftsman Andy Lee. In the tent next door, the seventh graders are working as well, but on what you might ask? In their earliest years, the students work with a soft, pliable medium, beeswax. They then move on in the earlier to middle grades to work in clay, followed by the firmer substance of wood in third and sixth grades. Then they go on to soft stone for sculpting in seventh grade and finally use metal, for the project of bowl making out of copper, a malleable metal that stretches within limits, but if hammered too

thin it gets so hard that it cracks and the artist must begin anew. There is a subtle lesson here within the medium that applies to the adolescent, to the seventh grader, in case you happen to have one at your home. Not only does the medium take sensitivity and patience to work with carefully and creatively, so do the budding young artists, like the strong-willed young woman in my class who made a clarification to my suggestion on how to work with a little less gusto on her hammer blows by simply stating, "Farmer Dan, I'm really not arguing. I'm just explaining why I am right."

When a teacher brings a new artistic medium or venue to a student, it not only enlightens the students but the gift of working with the children has a way of opening secret doors within us. In a certain way, we are always every age at once when working through the Waldorf curriculum with curious, evolving children, and it always touches memories, achievements and perhaps even wounds from our own childhoods. It gives teachers a way of continually renewing and upgrading our experience of living and growing and learning through the stages of human development. An image of the trackless woods from the edge of a forest, newly dressed in falling snow, comes to mind as one enters each new artistic experience with a fresh group of eager and curious kids. There might already be tracks under the freshly falling snow, but



together you get to make new ones.

Mark Twain once said, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do,” and Waldorf education lets everyone involved do so much, try so many things. With that thought, it is time to close. During this season of family and traditional gift-giving, try to remember the three things that money can’t buy: happiness, love and Bernie Sanders. And for your special loved one, your partner, during this season that can be stressful on relationships, this closing thought from the perfect partner: “I don’t want to be the other half of your soul. I want to be the one who reminds you that you’re already whole.”

Richest and warmest holiday blessings to all from Summerfield Farm!

Warmly, Farmer Dan

Winter Faire Appreciations

We would like to extend a big heartfelt thank-you to everyone who made Winter Faire a warm and magical event on a chilly winter day!

Little hands worked away, happily making beloved crafts, or rested on laps while listening to stories and puppet shows, and clapped with awe under the big top! Older students enjoyed helping young ones decorate Gingerbread cookies, make wool angels and shop in the Snowflake Shoppe, as well as selling their own handmade wares. Between shopping for beautiful, artisan gifts and socializing with friends, adults were warmed by the bonfire and a hearty meal of chili and warm drinks. Musicians and singers were the perfect accompaniment to our festivities.

First and foremost, a special thank-you to our wonderful and tireless Winter Faire team: Dawn Caccavale, Holly Trivan, Lisa and David Pratt, Kristin McClung, Kate Hammond, Jill Leras, Mary Leveque and Stephanie Stephens—we couldn’t have done it without you and thoroughly enjoyed working with you all!

Thank-you to those who showed up on a rainy, cold Friday to decorate the campus and help get the vendors settled. Thank you to everyone who put in extra effort to make a craft or activity happen, especially our amazing Snowflake Shoppe Fairies, Viviana Vigilante and Holly Hollinger. Thank you to all the staff and faculty who put in extra time and care, especially our dear ECE teachers for yet another extraordinary Puppet Show, and Mrs. Sternik and Mr. Lloyd for their captivating storytelling! Another special thank-you goes to Mark Holtz and Mathew Carson for managing the amazing feat of parking the masses so efficiently!

Thank you to the countless others who helped to make this beautiful day run smoothly; it really does take a village to make it happen! And last but certainly not least, thank you to those who stayed late on Saturday to help clean before the rain started... and thank you to those who showed up in the rain on Sunday to finish the job. You proved once again that when we all come together we can create something magical!

With warmth and gratitude, Andrea Jolicoeur,
Lisa Hensley & Kristi Hruzewicz

Celebrating Alumni!



Summerfield welcomes alumni and their parents to the **7th Annual Alumni Bash on December 26th, 3-6pm**. Free food and beverage, plus the opportunity to chat, laugh and have fun with old time friends.

Check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/events/1494841907510747/ where you will find more details about how this year’s event will be better than ever! Please spread the word to your classmates and friends.

This event is open to alumni age 21 and over, and everyone is welcome to bring a guest.

And let us know if you are interested in helping on the planning committee! To volunteer for this fun event contact development@summerfieldwaldorf.org.



Grandparents Day

Thank you to lead volunteer, Charmaine Stainbrook, and our team of volunteers for helping us organize another beautiful day for our guests!

Successful Accreditation Visit!

During a very busy three days in October, the seven visiting members that comprised our WASC/AWSNA dual accreditation team—all volunteers from both Waldorf and mainstream public and private schools—thoroughly evaluated Summerfield from preschool to high school. They got to know the Summerfield community inside the classroom and out, meeting with faculty, staff, parents and students in order to assess Summerfield's goals, and how well we are achieving them.

The visiting team concluded their process by presenting their findings, both commendations and recommendations, to our community in an open meeting. They were deeply impressed by what takes place here, and very supportive of our current objectives. The full Visiting Team Report can be seen online on our website (here, under the About Summerfield section), along with our Long-range Action Plan and Self Study. Some highlights of the Accreditation Team Report are copied below.

Since the visit, the Accreditation Leadership Team and Governance Council have been hard at work finalizing our 2015-2022 Long-range Action Plan. The official outcome of the accreditation visit and how long an accreditation term we've been granted—a possible six years from WASC and seven years from ASWNA—will be presented in February.

~ Heather Concoff, on behalf of the Accreditation Leadership Team

Major Commendations

- The school provides a coherent Waldorf education based upon the insights of Rudolf Steiner that manifests in a challenging, and relevant arts-imbued curriculum that fulfills the school's purpose by engaging students in developmentally appropriate material at every stage.
- SWSF benefits from the efforts of dedicated and skilled educators who are committed to the school's vision and values.
- The vibrant and healthy students are actively engaged in the life of the school, especially in project learning and community activities.
- SWSF parents are devoted to and supportive of independent Waldorf education at SWSF that celebrates the mind, body, and spirit of the child.
- SWSF makes good use of its 38-acre campus, which is itself an amazing resource for the school's learning community. The 6-acre Biodynamic farm is a great pedagogical resource for SWSF and fits well with the school's mission of "whole-child" education.
- The governance structure of SWSF reflects the culture of the school in its collaborative working.

Major Recommendations

- Increase the school's visibility in the broader Sonoma/Napa/Marin County areas and determine how the school's program can be distinguished from that of the local charter high school and other potential competitors.
- To further the goal noted above, explore prioritizing resources, both capital and human, toward the marketing function of the school to provide more focused, professional oversight.
- Maintain faculty and staff's awareness of possible safety issues, especially in the area of student supervision, for which specific policy should be written.
- Prepare for the impact on the school of the impending retirement of a number of staff members and explore succession planning and devoting more resources to faculty compensation, both in salary and benefits.
- Prioritize consideration of interim Library space with access to technology, to include location, funding, and staffing needs for school library functions, such as tutoring. Specifically consider spaces that will be emptied with construction of new Art Tech building.
- Apply for an amendment to the school's Conditional Use Permit to allow for additional growth of the student body.
- Find additional ways to provide remedial, tutorial, and/or accelerated support for children with different learning styles and strengths.

Remembering George...

By Andrea Trinej, on behalf of SWSF

We would like to remember and honor long-time Summerfield Community member George Triest, who passed away on November 24.



George and his wife Margo had four children who attended Summerfield, the last one, Rose Triest, having graduated from Summerfield in 2013. He was an amazing man who gave generously to the school. As our school's first volunteer AGC Chair, George created a legacy here at Summerfield—supporting Annual Giving and leading the way for a successful campaign each year since his tenure.

At George's request, there is no memorial service—during his hospice care, he saw and heard from so many family, friends and colleagues that he felt that was enough tribute. Those wishing to express condolences can do so via an online guest book at www.legacy.com/obituaries/pressdemocrat. Development Director, Cyndi Yoxall, shared, "Personally, George was a mentor and friend, who continues to inspire me. In my heart, this year's Annual Giving Campaign is in honor of George Triest, who taught many of us the value of gratitude and giving."

You will be missed, George! Thank you for sharing part of your radiant life with Summerfield!



Honoring Mary Beard

Mary Beard will be honored by the Board of Directors, faculty, and staff with a plaque dedicated to her many years of commitment to the Summerfield music program. The plaque will be put on the outside wall of the Green Room of Sophia Hall at the Winter Music Concert, Thursday, January 28.

Rick Concoff, former Music director at Summerfield, conducted the following interview with Mary recently.

When did you first become a part of SWSF and what was it that brought you here?

Philip and I helped found the school in 1974, along with 4 other couples organized by Christine Case. We met as a planning and study group for one year and then the first kindergarten met in a church the first year of the school; we then bought property on Hall Road and converted the house into two classrooms and a kindergarten room. There was also a small cottage for Irene Ellis to live in when she came from England to help us start our first grade and train our next teacher. She brought with her our first long-term kindergarten teacher Wendy Jo Gerst. Our son Elliott was in the second kindergarten with Wendy Jo. We had realized, when he was three years old, that he would not fare well in public schools because he was not “in his body”, wasn’t physically very coordinated, but was very much “in his head”. He was imaginative, very bright, had excellent fine motor control, and was already teaching himself to read. We felt he’d be pushed across the surface in what he could already do well, but never get grounded in his body in the public system. We had lived in Germany and were aware of Waldorf education. The more we studied it the more we felt it would be the right education for him, and so we got involved in creating the school.

Tell us about your kids in Summerfield.

We had three sons: Elliott, Julian and Jonathan. Elliott attended Summerfield as far as it went at the time, and then went to Montgomery

High School in Santa Rosa. Julian and Jonathan went from Kindergarten through twelfth grade. Elliott went on to become a lawyer in an International firm and lives with his wife and two teenagers in France. Julian became a high school teacher and then went into the solar panel industry; he lives with his wife and two daughters in Minnesota. Jonathan composes musical scores for film and TV and lives with his violinist wife in Los Angeles.

Tell us about your role as parent and pioneer of the music program?

Since I was a musician, I couldn’t imagine the school not having music available. In the early years we would piece together little adult orchestral groups for big events, but once the oldest group was in fourth or fifth grade, we began to have some students who could join us. I don’t any longer remember exactly which year we started a string class, but some of the first two classes were involved. It began as an optional after-school program which parents simply paid for. I found a local violin teacher eager to take a class, and by the second year we’d involved Cory Antipa with a cello class. The classes were small, but it was a start. Within a few years the faculty decided to bring it into the classroom, and we found a teacher willing to try teaching the entire third grade class. The cello class met separately. It wasn’t long before you came along, Rick, and you had the skills to work with the larger group successfully and the program became entrenched. At big events, we could include more and more students in our little orchestra, and eventually it became an all-student orchestra under Rick’s direction.

What is your professional background and what do you do now?

I have a degree in music from Stanford University, studying both voice and piano. After studying voice in Germany for two years, Philip and I returned to California and began our family. Shortly thereafter, I began to teach piano and eventually added in teaching singing. I still teach piano and voice.

What are a couple of fond memories you have of “back in the day.”

I have lots of fond memories since Summerfield really was a main focus in our lives while our children were young. But the joy of absolutely everyone being involved in the early years, while the school was still a “small family” was a lot of what kept us going, as well as watching our children thrive in the school’s environment. I loved learning along with the children. I truly wanted to go back to kindergarten and the magical world it presented. Oh, how my inner little girl wanted to be there! And the first parent evening with Ian Morrison, Elliott’s class teacher, was magical. Ian gave us a drawing lesson, and I fell in love with him on the spot. Then I took painting from Irene Ellis and discovered a whole new level of creativity in myself. We parents all did a lot of growing up with the school, and it was often very challenging, but the school grew up too and I’m so proud of what it’s become.

We look forward to honoring Mary Beard next month!

Grade Eight Thanks You!

Thank-you to the whole community for all your support of our eighth grade class trip fundraising efforts: *Burritos Viernes*, the Grade Eight Thursday Market, and our Holiday Wreath Sales.

Thanks to you we are on our way to our canoe trip down Labyrinth Canyon, Utah in April!

~Kibby MacKinnon, Eighth Grade teacher

Parent Education

We are delighted to announce two more classes for the new year in the ongoing series offered by Kate Hammond, a Waldorf adult educator and early childhood teacher with a special interest in how parents can support their children's natural development through the insights of Rudolf Steiner.

INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOSOPHY

Mondays 8.45–10.15am, in the Aftercare Room, starting Jan 11. 8 sessions—\$120

We will study Rudolf Steiner's lectures "Founding a Science of the Spirit", newcomers welcome. Contact Kate Hammond 2katehammond@gmail.com or (707) 623 9863.

INTRODUCTION TO WALDORF

Wednesdays 8.45–10.15am, in the Aftercare Room, starting Jan 13. 10 classes—\$200 (includes materials)

Join us for classes on Waldorf parenting topics and crafting! Topics include: home nursing, discipline, rhythm, understanding your child, connecting with nature. Crafts will include: silk dyeing, needle felting, wet felting, toy making, upcycled clothing, items for your seasonal table, woodland fairy houses, egg decorating. Contact Kate Hammond (707) 623 9863 or leave a message 2katehammond@gmail.com.

2016-2017 Financial Assistance Process Starts Now!

Financial assistance applications for all prospective ninth graders and new 5-day kindergarten applicants must be completed by **January 30, 2016**.

Financial assistance applications for all other grades must be completed by **February 12, 2016**.

TO APPLY, go to our website; click on *Tuition and Financial Assistance* under *Quick Links* and follow the instructions.

You must complete the FACTS online application by clicking the link on the instructions to the Summerfield application. You may begin completing the FACTS Tuition Aid application process now, but we ask that you not finalize the FACTS portion until you receive your 2015 W-2's. All supporting documentation (Tax returns, W-2's, etc.) are to be sent directly to FACTS Tuition Aid.

Summerfield financial assistance grants are confidential agreements between you and the school and we ask that you not share this agreement with others.



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Summerfield's *Messenger* newsletter is published once a month during the school year, and has a distribution list of 1,000 people! If you are interested in advertising in the *Messenger*, please visit our website at www.summerfieldwaldorf.org, or email messenger@summerfieldwaldorf.org for more information.

The Messenger Marketplace

Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, any of the individual initiatives or services advertised in this classified section. Advertisements are screened for appropriateness and made available to community members to use at their own discretion.

Community Enrichment

"The Incarnation of the Logos: An Epic Tale of Christ's Coming to Earth"

Performed by Glen Williamson (Member, Actors' Equity Association)

7pm, Sunday, December 27, 2015, in Sophia Hall. Admission: \$15 suggested donation. No one refused admittance. Appropriate for persons 12 yrs & older. Duration 75mins. Call 874-3528 for information.

The story of Jesus' birth, childhood and youth will come to life as professional New York actor and storyteller Glen Williamson performs *The Incarnation of the Logos*. The Language of the Heart Branch of the Anthroposophic Society of America presents the Anthropos production, which harmonizes the conflicting accounts of Matthew and Luke and weaves the threads of many traditions into an intimate but also cosmic drama. This wondrous story begins with the messianic prophecies in the Temple in Jerusalem, weaves through many parts of the world and throughout history, and ends with the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. Adam and Eve, Moses, Adonis, Osiris, Isis, Apollo, Krishna, Buddha and Zarathustra all appear in this sometimes astonishing retelling of the greatest story ever told. This saga is based on the Gospels and the work of spiritual researcher Rudolf Steiner and theologians Emil Bock and Edward R. Smith.

Glen Williamson, a founding member in New York City of The Actors' Ensemble and New Directions Theater, appeared in numerous productions with both companies, as well as with Walking the dog Theater. He currently plays multiple roles in seven productions touring throughout North America and in Europe. His production company Anthropos (the Greek word for human being) seeks to uphold and celebrate what is truly human through the arts of theater and storytelling. Visit AnthroposTheater.com.

Classes/Camps

Sewing Classes for Kids

Bowl & Spoon Stitchcrafts is now offering sewing classes for kids and teens ages 7 and up. Private lessons, small weekly groups. I provide a fun, engaging environment so your child's creativity can flourish. Give the gift of a life-long skill this Holiday Season. Gift certificates available now. Located in Sebastopol, CA. For more information contact: Nictela Cohen, www.bowlandspooncrafts.com, 707-889-6888.

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) is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Art Therapist, and specializes 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.

For Sale/Rent/Needed

Rick Concoff Violins

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