

The Magazine of the Alternative Education Resource Organization
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Graphic Demonstration of Democracy for a New Charter School

The Renaissance School is a new charter school started by a group of parents in Lakeland, Florida. Immediately upon their opening, they ran into serious trouble. The master teacher whom they had hired to train other teachers and lead the school in an alternative direction left for personal reasons before two weeks were up, and two other teachers followed. From then on, the group of parents and teachers were playing for simple survival. There were about 85 students in the school, from kindergarten through fifth grade. The parents who sent their children to the Renaissance School did so for a wide variety of reasons and had many different educational philosophies ranging from open education to Christian education. Many of the students had come to this school after having serious problems in other schools.

Just before Christmas the parent administrator of the school, Mari-Jean Melissa, found AERO on the Web and contacted us, asking for help in finding a new master teacher. We did the best we could, but it was hard to find such a person in the middle of the school year. We suggested that the teachers visit some other alternative schools in Florida that we thought were good examples, but they were not able to find the time to do so. They also talked about bringing me down there to do a consultation with the staff.

Meanwhile, the older group of students at Albany's Free School in New York was planning its major field trip for the year. They wanted to combine this with participation in the annual conference of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS), which was to be held at Upattinas School in Glenmoore, Pennsylvania. But Chris Marcogliano, co-director of the Free School who drove last year's group on a major trip, was not available to drive this year (and their teacher, Lex Bhagat, grew up in New York City and does not have a driver's license).

Three of the students in that group had gone with me to a regional NCACS conference in Vermont last October (and two of them had worked as interns in the AERO office for a week). They knew that I had taken groups on similar trips when I directed my school in Vermont, so they called to ask me if I would drive them. I hadn't taken a driving trip in years with such a large group—12 people—certainly not since I had been hospitalized with a ruptured disc three years ago. Also, I was very busy with work on AERO and had little time for such a trip, but they managed to talk me into it. Bree Edwards, another Free School staff member, the school's cook, joined our group and was able to help with some of the driving.

I contacted the Renaissance School in Florida to see if they might be able to cover some of our traveling expenses in exchange for our doing a demonstration of democratic decision-making for the school and meeting with the staff, students, and parents. The Renaissance School was very excited about the idea and said they would be glad to do this. Meanwhile, the Free School students organized two major fundraising events: a fish fry, and a play that they co-wrote with their teacher and performed twice. They raised nearly \$2,000 with the combination of these events. \$500 of it needed to go toward conference expenses for the NCACS, which in itself was a considerable reduction in the usual price; \$185 went to replace staff salaries; \$215 went to fly one student who had an important family obligation a day after our departure down to Florida. This left about \$950 to be spent on the rest of the trip to Florida, with Renaissance agreeing to cover \$450 worth of expenses. Although this averaged out to only about \$7 a day per person, we managed to make it work in inimitable Free School style by spending virtually nothing for sleeping, staying mostly at alternative schools we knew along the way or camping out, and getting donations, such as tickets to Marineland. Near South of the Border in South Carolina, just south of the North Carolina border, is a tourist site that has motels, rides, miniature golf, etc. We broadcast our radio show live from there and they donated two large rooms for the group to stay in with their sleeping bags.

Our first stop was Heathcote Community in Maryland, a community that is based on the concept of permaculture. They gave us a tour of their grounds and showed us a lot of their environmentally friendly techniques of composting, using solar energy, and water conservation. We then stayed at South of the Border, camped out at Marineland in Florida, swam at Daytona Beach, and drove over to Renaissance school at Lakeland, past Orlando.

Upon arriving at the Renaissance School, we had a day to get acquainted with the situation. The school had planned a trip to a new museum in St. Petersburg that features artifacts from the Titanic, and four of the students from our group went with them. The rest of the group went to the beach on the Gulf coast. The students who went to the Titanic exhibit so interested the Renaissance School parents who chaperoned the group that the parents decided that they wanted to spend the days at the school visiting us when we did our presentation. We had organizational meetings as we drove along in the van and at the school itself, preparing for our presentation.

As much as possible, we wanted to immerse them in the democratic Free School experience. On Thursday, the entire school was shepherded into their biggest room. Our group made a circle in the middle and the students and staff of the Renaissance School surrounded us. At first, the school said that they wouldn't include the younger students, but we thought they should be included in the process so the younger ones came into the room also.

First I made a general introduction, talking about the different kinds

of alternative schools. Two of the Free School students, Ted and Zack, talked about the Free School and the council meetings, which we were about to demonstrate. Then we organized a council meeting on a real, current issue for our group, as a demonstration of how we dealt with problems. There were two nominations and Jessica was elected chairperson. She asked who called the meeting. I said that I had, because some people in the group had been keeping others awake late at night by talking and making noise.

The discussion started with Candace saying that she was up late because some people had seen something out the window that scared them, and they talked about what they thought they saw. Then somebody brought up the fact that Candace had had cola in the evening and perhaps that was what had kept her awake. Several members of the group expressed their ideas and opinions about the problem. After five or ten minutes of discussion a little hand went up about four or five rows deep, outside of the fishbowl. It was Israel, a blond-haired seven-year-old Renaissance School student. I asked him if he understood what was going on. He responded that, yes, he understood and furthermore, he thought he had a solution to the group's problem. Some of the Renaissance teachers were clearly stunned. We invited Israel into the group and within a short time there were another half-dozen Renaissance students who had joined the inner circle and were participating in the meeting. This demonstrated, graphically and palpably, that for these students who had never seen a democratic meeting before, this process was a very natural one for them, one in which they immediately felt comfortable in participating. At other times I'd seen the school noisy and somewhat chaotic, but for this entire process, you could have heard a pin drop. The students clearly realized that this was an important event and they wanted to understand every bit of it.

In the end, the group made two or three proposals concerning the problem. One was that there was to be no drinking beverages with caffeine after five o'clock in the afternoon. This included staff members drinking coffee. It was also decided that there would be a quiet time, after which people would either go to the sleeping area or go to another part of the school if they were going to stay up later. Candace would be the enforcer for the bedtime rules because she was the person who kept people awake the night before. I should add that Israel's idea was that everybody should have a separate sleeping place so that the noise wouldn't bother them, but it was pointed out that, considering the situation of the group, that wouldn't be practical.

After the demonstration meeting, the Renaissance School group was divided up into five smaller groups, each of which was led by two members of the Free School group. The task for each group was to bring up one issue that they considered to be a problem. It could be a personal issue or it could be a problem with the school itself. They would have a discussion on it and perhaps have some motions on proposals for solutions. The groups met for about half an hour. The issues brought up ranged from problems between individual kids to the problem of noise in the school.

Some of the groups came up with proposals and others didn't get quite that far, but it seemed that every group was quite successful in the process and this was all reported to the big group when we came back together. For the rest of the day most of us were involved in discussions of the process that had taken place in the morning with various groups of staff members and parents until about five-thirty in the evening.

The following day, each of the students in our group taught a class, either singly or in pairs, and all of the students in the school chose which ones they wanted to attend. These included classes on the use of the Internet, a phys-ed class on basketball, an art class, a music class, and an acting class. Later in the day the acting class performed a play they had created and the dance class demonstrated the dance steps they had learned. The concept that students could teach classes was certainly established, as was the idea that students could effectively choose the classes they wanted to attend, based on interest rather than age or grade level. This was again followed by meetings with staff and parents. Also, they had brought a Ping-Pong table into the school the previous day and I taught a lot of the students table tennis. One of my classes had 35 students in it, the most to whom I've ever taught beginning table tennis. I taught the phys-ed teacher some techniques so that he'd be able to continue that process. I like teaching table tennis because it is non-academic and unthreatening, but through it students learn that they are able to learn something that is new well.

Although it went quite smoothly, some parents were upset, especially when some children went home and announced that the Free School kids could do whatever they wanted, and could swear and say anything they wanted. A few of the parents gave instructions that their children were not to have contact with the Free School students. The teachers and administrators did the best they could to communicate with those parents and alleviate their concerns. Our feedback from the school since then has been that the school was considerably inspired by our visit and all of the teachers have been able to use the democratic decision-making process with their groups.

When we were visiting the Grass Roots Free School on the way back, we broadcast our radio show from there and Pam, one of the teachers from the Renaissance School called to express her appreciation for what we had brought to them. She said that the very next day she had used the process in her classroom and it had worked very well. It was chaired by a boy who had been very disappointed that we weren't going to stay around the school longer. I was told that this boy had often been a "trouble-maker" at the school. It is not surprising that, given the chance, many of these "trouble-makers" become positive leaders.

On the radio show, Pat Seery, the founder and director of the Grass Roots Free School, was also a guest, and the interaction between Pam, from the Renaissance School, and Pat was great as she asked him a number of questions about how they ran the Grass Roots Free School.

The next night, Lex's brother Sajan, who is a chef, cooked us a great

meal when we stayed at his house in Atlanta. The next morning we visited the Horizon School in Atlanta. Horizons has continued its remarkable program of building inexpensive buildings with staff and student labor, the latest of which is a beautiful theater. Our journey north continued with a stay and talk at Blue Mountain School, in Floyd, Virginia.

Wednesday we reached the NCACS Conference at Upattina's School in Pennsylvania. About 150 students and teachers participated in this year's conference. The board had completed its meeting before we arrived and made decisions to make significant changes in the organization, to raise enough money to hire two staff people, and to move the office out of Santa Fe to a location near a major city. Groups attended from as far away as Japan, with Kazuhiro Kojima of the Global Free School bringing a group of eight people. There were also groups from Laurel High School and The Farm, both in Tennessee, Pedro Abilzu Campos High School in Chicago, and Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The first night I did a fund-raising auction for the NCACS for the first time in 7 years, raising \$1,100 for the organization. There was a day of field trips to Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Dutch area, and other places. I attended a workshop on the NCACS teacher-training program. There were some other unusual events, such as sheep shearing and a sweat lodge.

John Gatto visited the conference and spoke that evening at Haverford College. One of the Free School students was very taken with Gatto's idea that the public school system is accomplishing just what it was designed to accomplish: educating 20% of the population for leadership positions and dumbing down the rest to be followers.

After the conference, I drove the group to Albany where I did a last radio show on the road, interviewing one of the students and Chris Mercogliano about his new book about the Free School. (AERO has copies to sell of Chris's book about the Free School, Making It Up as We Go Along. Send \$21 to AERO, plus \$3 for postage, or order by credit card by calling us at 800-769-4171.)

The Renaissance School is still looking for teachers with experience in alternative education for next year. AERO, through the Free School group or other schools, is interested in doing more workshops for schools interested in democratic decision-making process. Contact us if you are interested in being part of this process.

AERO trip in July to Vinnitsa, Ukraine for International Democratic Education Conference

The International Democratic Education Conference will have its sixth annual meeting at the Stork Family School in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, from July 7th to 15th. AERO has been part of the organizing group and will be bringing at least 10 American students, teachers and parents to the conference. The cost of the conference itself will be minimal because we helped to arrange a Soros Foundation grant to the Stork Family School to support the conference. It is probably too late for readers to go to this

conference by the time you get this newsletter, because of the time it takes to get visas. But contact us if you would like to go to similar AERO-organized trips.

Oleg Belin of the Stork Family sent this e mail: "We were able to book sleeping places in a nearby hotel. Staying in the hotel and the meals as well as transportation from the airport to Vinnitsa and back will be free for the participants. At the Conference we intend to have presentations and workshops of schools discussing democratic education problems and successes, handicraft demonstrations and workshops, debates, theatrical productions and workshops, and any other activities which people would like to suggest or bring, as we did last year. There will also be tours around Vinnitsa and its vicinities, and to Kiev and other places of interest, a trip to the site of archaeological excavations, concerts, table tennis and tennis competitions etc." Oleg Belin.

(valery@doroshenko.vinnica.ua), 380 4324 65577. People can also get more information from Jerry Mintz, Zahava Barkani of Hadera School, at 972 986 63718 or David Gribble in England at 44 13 63 87 72 33.

We are also expecting participants from England, New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, Hungary, Austria, the Democratic School of Hadera in Israel, The Hope Flower School in the West Bank, and three schools in Russia, as well as many from the Ukraine. We'll have a full report in the next AERO-GRAMME.

New Edwards Foundation Grant of \$25,500 Supports Stork Family School and Three Other Schools

The Edwards Foundation, has awarded another generous grant to support the Stork Family School in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, The Moscow International Film School, Albany's Free School, and the Hope Flower School in Bethlehem, in the West Bank of Israel. These grants were secured through the efforts of AERO. David Gamper is the President of the Edwards Foundation. He has started alternative schools himself in the past and is a well known avant-garde musician who recently performed with his Deep Listening Band in Manhattan.

These grants are of great importance to these schools. For example, the Ukraine government now takes 85% of the tuition paid to the Stork Family School. Until that law can be changed, a grant like this means survival of the school.

Former Alternative Education Student is Starting Alternative Education Alumni Association through AERO

It is time for all of us who are alumni of educational alternatives, as students, staff, or parents, to band together to create a new alumni association, one that could become a powerful force in supporting alternative education, and act as a catalyst for changing our current educational system to one that inspires the growth of all students in a

more humanistic manner.

I experienced both alternative and public schooling as a student, and I have some strong opinions about the ethics of education. Even though I did well in public school, I always viewed my experiences there as a time to “know thy enemy.” My involvement in alternative education has helped me develop strong moral values, something that seems to be increasingly missing in the current, traditional public-school system. Also missing is trust in the individual’s ability and desire to learn, which is taken for granted in most alternative systems.

The bureaucracy in public institutions has gotten out of hand. So many times you hear of positive things being shut down by a paranoid system afraid of being sued. We are in a vulnerable time right now as companies try to buy our children with instruments and computers in exchange for running advertisements during the morning announcements. We are selling our kids to big business, which does not care about anything except money. I worry that we are going to see the development of small boot-camp-like training centers that do not allow for the growth of diversity, but continue to produce drones who never take the time to question what they are being fed. That is why it is time for everyone who ever thought that students deserve more from their schools to step up and voice their opinions.

One powerful way of doing this is to help us organize the Alternative Education Alumni Association. The purposes of this association are to support the promotion of educational alternatives and perhaps also assist with incorporating the ideals of alternative education into the educational mainstream. These would include learning how to learn for oneself, and that learning is a process usable throughout life, not just during our “schooled” time.

By pulling our alumni together, we can explore the achievements of alternative education, communicate with each other, and connect with the developments in educational alternatives today. It’s time to tell the world about our accomplishments. This is our chance to break the stereotypes that have prevented an open approach to education for all people. It is time for us to step up and speak for our future, to share the knowledge we have gained. It’s time for those of us who have experienced these approaches to make a commitment to the alternative education movement, and to give more students a chance to grow in a more humanistic, less degrading way.

We will conduct a national survey of students who went to alternative schools or programs, or who homeschooled. Such a survey could be very important because it may show that, compared with traditional public education, alternative approaches help students lead more satisfying and productive lives, something we suspect, but which has never been studied. It also would provide an idea of how many people have experienced these alternatives. This association would have many possible services. We can act as a clearinghouse for people interested in sharing their knowledge

with others. Among our alumni we have people skilled in an amazing variety of areas, which would be a valuable resource for educational alternatives.

We need help! In addition to resources and services we could provide directly to the movement, if you could find an alumni list for your present or former school we could lead fund-raisers through these alumni, with the large majority of funds being put back into your school, and some to support the general work of AERO to promote all alternatives. Also, the statistics we develop could be used in your brochures. If you are an alumnus of an educational alternative or if you could provide us with a list of alumni from your school or program, please contact us. For your help and cooperation we will also give you and your school a subscription to AERO-GRAMME (the magazine of the Alternative Education Resource Organization). We hope that you will join this cause and make it feasible for us to reach as many alternative education alumni as possible. Please contact us at 800-769-4171.

-Angela Cross, founding member of the Alternative Education Alumni Association, and former student and staff member of Albany's Free School, and Shaker Mountain School.

Ten Signs That You Need to Find a Different Kind of Education for Your Child

In trying to figure out ways to increase the exposure of AERO, I began contacting some of the local papers that deal with parents and education. On Long Island there are two such publications: Long Island Parenting and Parent Guide. Initially I thought that I could place some information on AERO in a resource section, but it became apparent that both of these papers were advertising-based only. One of the editors, being sympathetic to what AERO was attempting to accomplish and seeing the benefit of informing parents of their options in their children's' education, suggested that we write an article, "Ten Signs That Your Child Might Need a Different Educational Approach," and I asked Jerry Mintz to write the following article. I thought it might be interesting to encourage everyone reading this to find similar papers in their communities that might reprint this article. This will accomplish two things: It will help AERO get more national recognition and help us to become a clearinghouse for educational alternatives. It will also help increase awareness of your school, and interest in innovative educational approaches. -John Sauer, AERO director of development and communications.

Many parents do not realize that the education world has changed drastically since they were in school. Back in those days, schools were smaller, class sizes were smaller, dropout rates were lower, violence in school was almost unheard of, teachers were not terrified of showing

affection to the children, or of teaching and discussing moral values. Even through rose-colored glasses, we know that school back then was no picnic and was far from perfect, but at least the teachers and usually the principal knew every student by name, something which is not necessarily true today. Because our public school system now has deteriorated considerably, many parents, teachers, and individuals have taken it upon themselves to create public and private alternatives to that traditional system which is definitely failing. It is important for parents to know that they have choices, alternatives to the neighborhood school. How do you know that it is time to look for another educational approach for your children? Here are some of the signs:

1. Do your children say they hate school? If so, something is probably wrong with the school because children are natural learners. When they're young you can hardly stop them from learning. If your children say they hate school, listen to them.
2. Do your children find it difficult to look an adult in the eye, or to interact with children younger or older than they are? If so, they may have become "socialized" to that very narrow group which many children ordinarily interact with in most schools, and may be losing the ability to communicate with a broader group of children and adults.
3. Do your children seem fixated on designer labels and trendy clothes for school? This is a symptom of the shallowness of the traditional schools' approach, causing children to rely on external means of comparison and acceptance, rather than deeper values.
4. Do your children come from school tired and cranky? This is a sure sign that their educational experiences are not energizing but are actually debilitating.
5. Do your children come home complaining about conflicts that they've had in school and unfair situations that they have been exposed to? This is a sign that your school does not have a proper process for conflict resolution and communication.
6. Have your children lost interest in creative expression through art, music, and dance? These things are generally not encouraged in the traditional system today and are not highly valued. They're considered secondary to the "academic" areas. In some cases, courses are not even offered in these areas any more. This tends to extinguish these natural talents and abilities in children.
7. Have your children stopped reading for fun, or reading or writing for pleasure? Are your children doing just the minimum for homework and going

off for some escapist activity? This is a sign that these spontaneous activities are not being valued in their school and another sign that people are losing their creativity.

8. Do your children procrastinate until the last minute to do homework? This is a sign that the homework is not very interesting, is not really meeting their needs, and is tending to extinguish their natural curiosity.

9. Do your children come home talking about anything exciting that happened in school that day? If not, maybe nothing exciting is happening for your children in school. Would you want to keep working if your job was like that?

10. Did the school nurse or guidance counselor suggest that your children have some strange, three-lettered disease like ADD, and that they should now be given Ritalin or some other drug? I suggest that it is more probable that the school has the disease, EDD—Educational Deficit Disorder, and it's time to get your children out of that situation!

If your children have exhibited several of these characteristics, it is time for you to start looking for an alternative. In most parts of this country today, there are many options to choose from. For example, 30 states have now enacted legislation which allows groups of parents and teachers to create charter schools, schools that are not stuck with having to fulfill the myriad of state regulations but can create their own individualized approach. Four years ago there were only five of these charter schools in the country. By the end of this year there will be more than 1,000 of them! Also, there are 4,500 magnet schools throughout the country, public schools that specialize in an area of expertise, and draw students from a wider area.

In most communities there are many private alternatives quietly offering a different educational approach. For example, there are over 4,500 Montessori schools based on the experiential approach designed by Dr. Maria Montessori, and hundreds of Waldorf schools that put equal emphasis on traditional academic areas and the arts. There are hundreds of independent alternative schools, many emphasizing participant control with parents and students taking responsibility for their own educations.

Many public school systems have a variety of alternative programs within their systems. These are divided into two general approaches: 1. Public Choice; those programs which are open to any student in the community. Sometimes they are called "schools within schools." 2. Public At-Risk; those programs for children who have had a variety of problems coping with school. These programs run the spectrum from helpful to dumping ground. Examine them closely before making a decision to enroll.

Parents of over a million children in this country have checked off “none of the above” and decided to teach their children at home. It is now legal in every state and does not require teacher certification. Homeschooling has taken a variety of approaches. Some try to create “school at home” with a fairly standard curriculum, the main difference being that parents can teach one-on-one with their children. Some families have signed up with a curriculum designed by an umbrella school that helps parents with the curriculum and, in some cases, grades homework, providing a basic curriculum for parents to follow and helping with any report forms that are necessary. A third approach is one which is called “unschooling,” where parents base their educational approach on the interests of the child and build on them, rather than using a pre-set curriculum. In some of these cases families design their curriculum “retroactively,” keeping records of their activities throughout the year and, at the end of the process, dividing the experiences into the appropriate subject area.

Most states require some form of testing of homeschoolers, and it has been shown that remarkably, as a group, they average in the 85th percentile compared to the 50th percentile of the average public school student. There are now so many homeschoolers around the country that virtually all homeschoolers are part of some kind of homeschool group. Some of these groups have coalesced into homeschool resource centers, and some operate as often as four or five days a week. Generally, colleges have discovered that homeschoolers make such good students that they welcome homeschooling students to apply to their schools.

As more and more parents become aware of and make these choices, we hope that the system will evolve into one that meets the needs of an increasing number of students. Meanwhile, don’t wait for that system to change. Take responsibility for your children’s education. Find out what your choices are and choose what is best for your child. –Jerry Mintz

Jerry Mintz is the director of the Alternative Education Resource Organization, and editor-in-chief of The Almanac of Education Choices. The Almanac lists over 6,000 educational alternatives by state in zip code order and has essays about homeschooling, charter schools, and the history of alternative education. AERO can be reached by calling 800-769-4171 or online at <http://www.edrev.org>.

Readers can find out about local educational alternatives by calling the (Put in your school name) _____ School at _____.

THE NEW EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS: BRICKS OR WINGS?

Earlier this year I went to a conference that was keynoted by

representatives of a state department of education, proudly talking about all the new educational standards they were planning to impose on the children of the state. Rather than stay at the posh hotel where the conference was held, I stayed with my friends at a nearby free school. At the conference, I discovered that the officials had never even heard of that free school, although it was in their city. As I left the conference, I taped the following summary of the situation, outlining the two conflicting paradigms:

When children are born, they want to reach for the sky. All children are born with wings, and the desire to fly.

But professional educators have forgotten that. So they have decided that the best way for kids to reach for the sky is to give them bricks, lots of bricks, the heavier the better, and a plan, a perfect plan, outlining the only way the bricks are to be used, to build a structure so they can go high into the sky. And although some of those children do use the bricks, and do go nearly to the top of the structure, most of them get tired and give up building.

But freeschoolers and unschoolers, they still have their wings. They know how to fly, up, up, past the top of that brick structure, far into the sky. So all we really ask of those professional educators is this: Please don't give those freeschool children and unschool children any bricks to carry with them. JM

Mail and Communications
Edited by Carol Morley

Feedback from AERO-GRAMME #23

--Phone message from John Gatto, 3/10/98:

...It's just a magnificent thing that you've done. It's so valuable to everybody, and I want to give you hearty congratulations...I'll tell audiences when they ask what's out there that they can hold on to, "Boy, it's a rock. It's a rock."

--Karen Anderson, dolfin@seasurf.com, California:

Just a quick one to let you know: got the new AERO-GRAMME. Like the new format, and LOVE your "Longer School Year Not the Answer." Gets right to the heart of the issue. Great job!

--George Kostveit Gabriel, gabriel@c2i.net, Liljeveien 13c, 1450 Nesoddtangen, Norway: It is a great photo of Alfred and baby. We are starting a new school. I have already used a quote from Chris Balch's

article that I think does a great job describing the essence of what a school should be about.

--Regan Haulotte, rhaulotte@hotmail.com:

I thought the entirety of AERO-GRAMME #23 was, as usual, excellent. I like the new format, and I like how you've incorporated Changing Schools into the magazine. In fact, Don Glines' article in that section was my favorite one in the whole issue. I sure hope public schools can soon be reorganized along the lines that he suggests. So far, I've received two responses on the World Citizens School: one from a young lady still in high school, and another (just in today's mail) who's connected to a world travel/experiential learning outfit in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I hope this is only the beginning!

--Mary Leue, MarySKOLE@aol.com, founder of Albany's Free School:

I ought to have sent you word ere now how gorgeous the new format for AERO is! Congratulations!

--Jean Reed, bfbooks@nbnet.nb.ca, Maine:

The new look on the last issue of AERO-GRAMME was very nice. It is neat, attractive, and easy to file for reference.

--Helena Singer, singersp@usp.br, Brazil:

I have just received AERO-GRAMME 23 and I became really impressed. It is very nice; the quality of the paper is always getting better and there are some very interesting articles. Congratulations!

--Sandy Strahl, sandy@cscocomputers.com:

I munched away in ecstasy through the last issue and am hungry again!

Editor's note: We'd like to express our thanks to Sidney Solomon and the Solomon Press for the help they have given us in creating the new format for AERO-GRAMME!

Other Communications

Mary Leue, Editor of SKOLE, the wonderful Journal of Alternative Education, has announced that the summer issue will be the last one she edits. She is looking for someone or an organization to take over editing the journal, which has been published since 1985. If you are able to help or know someone who can help with any aspect of producing SKOLE, contact Mary at MarySKOLE@aol.com, call 518-432-1578, or write to her at 72 Philip St, Albany, NY 12202.

This summer's Student Action in Learning (S.A.I.L.) program is a two-week adventure for youths aged 14 to 19 aboard a sailboat exploring the Bahama

Islands. The program is offered by The Centre for World Studies and will take place in July. Participants will have opportunities to learn navigation and charting skills, discover the art and science of sailing, explore the cultures and history of the Bahamas, explore reefs and natural environments, develop leadership skills, explore wellness practices, and have fun. For more information, contact The Centre for World Studies at 2163 Stone Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, e-mail: WorldSt313@aol.com.

Thanks for your steady networking and reporting in AERO. We're offering a new semester program in spring '99 to green kibbutzim in Israel based on our Geocommons College Year model. It will be a terrific program based at Kibbutz Gezer with 12 credits through the University of New Hampshire. And from August 3-18 we'll be running our fourth Summer Institute in Sustainable Living with permaculture design and 4 credits through UNH. Bruce Kantner, Director, RR2 Box 793 Derbyshire Farm, Temple, NH 03084, 603-654-6705.

We appreciate the letter we received recently from Barbara Backler who is using our video on Democratic Meetings in elementary schools in the Chicago area. She says she hopes that the NCACS "will stay alive and well and that someday people will realize that schools don't have to have four walls and all look the same and discourage free thinking." We certainly second that! Barbara is with the Harmony School Education Center, PO Box 1787, Bloomington, IN 47402, 812-334-8349, fax: 812-333-3435.

The Center for Inspired Learning serves as an online clearinghouse and virtual meeting place where educators and life-long learners can come together to share ideas related to progressive structures and holistic approaches to education. We are building online forums and library references for parents, students, teachers, and communities that want to start or restructure a school. This Center will allow for critical dialog and references that appreciate both the diversity and value of holistic practices, such as homeschooling, Waldorf, Montessori, and democratic or "free" schools. Robin Martin, <http://www.inspiredinside.com/learning/>.

Students at New College begin each semester on Norwich University's campus for two weeks. Following that, they return home to continue their studies online via computer seminars and faculty mentors. Students learn from experience, internships, volunteer work, and cross-cultural experiences. Instruction is individualized and delivered through faculty mentors. For a brochure and application, write to Vermont College of Norwich University, Admissions Office, Montpelier, VT 05602, 800-336-6794, fax: 802-828-8855.

Alan Schulman wrote us that reading AERO-GRAMME "was kind of shocking. I had no idea that so many people in so many different places were practicing alternatives.... I feel like the dawning of a new morning for those of us

still in the struggle for democratic choices available to parents and children. Thanks.” Thank you, Alan, and we couldn’t agree more. Alan tells us that International Bridges has reopened the United Nations, through UNESCO, as a resource to the New York City school system. The program is co-sponsored by the International Network of Alternative and Productive Schools and Programs and the National Academy of Alternative Education, which are attracting an increasing number of experienced and new educators. Alan is part of New York’s City-As-School alternative public high school program, one of the most successful and most often-replicated in the country and around the world. International Bridges is part of their efforts to extend their network of communications to others in the educational field. City-As-School, 116 Nassau Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, 718-858-0514, fax: 718-858-0846.

An article called “An Unnoticed Oppression” by David Gribble was published in Lib ED No. 28. David says that children in both England and Japan are oppressed so routinely that “we don’t even notice it.” He quoted from a Japanese newspaper account about a 50-year old teacher who was given a two-year sentence after a 16-year old female student of his died as a result of his administration of corporal punishment to her. The judge stated that the teacher’s intentions were “of a good educational nature, in trying to stop silly behaviour” but that he had gone too far. That kind of attitude, says David, is pervasive in England also, though not nearly as severe. Lib ED, Phoenix House, 170 Wells Road, Bristol, BS4 2AG, United Kingdom.

Plans are being made for the possible September, 1999, opening of a Sudbury-model school in western Connecticut. Laura Webber, a middle-school English/history teacher and a program facilitator for the Interlocken Center for Experiential Learning in Hillsboro, NH, is spearheading the development campaign. The proposed democratically-managed school (to be called the Housatonic Valley Community School) will model itself on Sudbury Valley School and other free schools such as Summerhill School in England and The Free School in Albany, NY. Students aged 11 to 18 will pursue their own educational and life interests in an ungraded, non-coercive, uncurricularized environment that supports students’ self-initiated goals. Homeschooling families may be particularly interested in this school--students can reap the social and collaborative benefits of organized schooling while retaining the spirit of individualism and personal responsibility that homeschooling often cultivates. Contact Luz Shosie of Unschooler’s Support at 203-458-7402 or Laura Webber at 203-794-9065.

In April, 1998, Skipping Stones announced the winners of the Fifth Annual Skipping Stones Honor Awards. These include Aruna’s Journeys by Jyotsna Sreenivasan; A Rainbow at Night by Bruce Hucko; D is for Doufu by Maywan Shen Krach; Atlas of the Rain Forests by Anna Lewington; and many more. Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children’s magazine which offers a forum for

communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. P.O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403, 541-342-4956, e-mail: skipping@efn.org.

Dennis Schapiro and Brenda Hellen edited the 1998 Montessori Community Resource, which is now available. The book is a directory of schools and training centers in America that identify themselves as Montessori. It also includes resources, videos, software, Montessori homeschooling, conferences, other sources of listings, and more. It is available from Jola Publications, 2933 North 2nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

The May, 1998, issue of Sales & Marketing Management contained an article called "Making the Dining Room a Classroom" by Julie Eberle, edited by Erika Rasmusson. The short article describes why Lisa Bastian, who works from home, decided to homeschool her two children. Jerry Mintz was interviewed for this piece, as well as Marsha Stein of the National Education Association. The magazine is a division of Bill Communications, 355 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010-1789, 212-592-6324.

The focus of issue Number 9 of Circles on the Mountain: A Journal for Rites of Passage Guides is on adolescence. Some of the information provided in this issue covers public school rites-of-passage programs, an international perspective, and a resource directory of wilderness rites-of-passage programs for adolescents, as well as material written by youths from their perspective. The next issue of the twice-a-year publication will focus on stories. Contact Scott Johnson at 2012 Tenth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710, 510-843-1234.

The Sudbury Valley School Journal, March, 1998, was their thirtieth anniversary commemorative Issue. The issue contains selections from the newsletter from 1972 through 1998. They were written by students, parents, and staff (without mention of those designations, as usual). The Journal is edited by Mimsy Sadofsky and is published by SVS Press, 2 Winch Street, Framingham, MA 01701, 508-877-3030.

The Kauffman Foundation used to promise college scholarships to high-performing high school students, but had to discontinue the program when they realized students didn't seem to improve when left in the same environment, in spite of such incentives. The Monthly Letter to Friends of The Center for Education Reform (February, 1998) stated that the students who did well were those that Kauffman sent to parochial schools, as opposed to those in public schools. "Similar programs have failed in trying to transform children whose very school setting may be the deterrent. Children with few alternatives are not likely to rise to the challenge if the odds are against them." The Letter is available from the Center for Education Reform at 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 204, Washington, DC 20036.

This review of AERO-GRAMME #22 appeared in Drop Out #5: "I'm really excited about this publication and the resource organization that's behind it. It is yet another compilation of information about the amazing things happening in the alternative education movement. The most inspiring thing is that people in many different arenas (alternative education advocates both in private and public schools, homeschoolers, deschoolers) are seeing themselves as allies... This magazine is always full of newsbits from all over the world, plus excellent resources and news of upcoming conferences." Thanks, Pam, for such a fine review! Drop Out, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

How Montessori secondary schools are designed and organized and how they differ from Montessori elementary schools is explained in an article entitled "Adolescence Without Tears" by Tim Seldin, President of The Montessori Foundation, in *Tomorrow's Child* (Spring, 1998). Realizing that Montessori materials are no longer interesting to older teens, students are encouraged to create their own materials in art or craft shops. The programs place an emphasis on self-directed learning, hands-on activities, and flexibility in teaching styles, assignments, and testing strategies. A sense of community in the schools allows the students to take part in planning and operating the programs. The magazine is available from The Montessori Foundation, 901 N. Pitt Street, Suite 310, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Public Alternatives

AERO was represented at the Parent Choice in Education Conference: The Quiet Revolution. The conference was organized to acquaint inner-city parents with options for their children's educations. Presentations on charter schools and homeschooling were given, among others. Troy Williamson of CEO America talked about privately funded voucher programs. Jerry Mintz spoke on "An Overview of the Revolution." The conference was organized by Judy Burnett, roxburysls@juno.com, the United in Spirit Coalition, 56 Dale St, Roxbury, MA 02119.

The U.S. Department of Education publishes *Community Update*, which keeps readers informed of educational initiatives occurring on the federal level, such as President Clinton's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. This program will enable school-community collaborations to establish or expand before- and after-school, weekend, and summer programs for students. The publication is available online at www.ed.gov/G2K/community or from the Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-0498.

Efforts to incorporate Waldorf education into public schools is creating confusion within the Waldorf movement and among parents and students of the

public schools in question. An editorial by Gary Lamb, "Save the Children," explains that there are nine such initiatives in this country, five of them in California. One of these California schools, Oak Ridge Elementary in Sacramento, was the scene of six weeks of parent protests and student boycotts last spring. Lamb sums up the difficulties these initiatives have caused as follows: "One of the great overarching goals of Waldorf education is to liberate education from the state, but ... the movement is collaborating with, becoming entangled with, and in effect, helping to promote government schools." The Association of Waldorf Schools in North America maintains that it will remain an association of independent schools and therefore opposes public Waldorf education. However, some individuals and other member institutions strongly support the creation of public Waldorf schools. For more on this issue, contact The Threefold Review, P.O. Box 6, Philmont, NY 12565, 518-672-5605.

A study of Kentucky's state-level accountability program found that those schools that produced higher student scores on state assessment tests did so because they "aligned curriculum with the assessment instrument" and "incorporated ... test-taking skills into the regular curriculum." Teachers in these schools were highly skilled and "had direct contacts with the state's accountability program through professional ties" and knew how to "use and interpret the considerable amount of information the state issued as a guide to help schools improve practice." The principals of these schools did not have a major impact on the schools' success, but typically a principal of any of the less successful schools was "more a nurturing figure than a strong instructional leader and chose not to exercise leadership to overcome teacher preferences" for traditional curricula. The study was done by Carolyn Kelley, a University of Wisconsin-Madison Education Professor and was detailed in the Wisconsin Center for Education Research Highlights Newsletter, 1025 West Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706.

Arnold Greenberg (grnbrg@downeast.net) has started a new school in Maine, Liberty School, funded by local tuition similar to a voucher, since their local town has no official high school. He reports, "Liberty School is doing well. We expect to go from 45 to 65 students next year. We now receive tuition from the sending towns and even have the school buses taking our students." Very exciting.

Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, Spring, 1998, reported on a school-within-a-school in the article, "Sustained Success: The Wheatley School SWS," written by Nicole Krauss, Jodi Kreitzman, Sharone Ostrow, and Mary Anne Raywid. The Wheatley School is located on Long Island, NY, and is attended by 525 eighth- to twelfth-graders. The SWS program has 75 students for three periods a day; the rest of the day the SWS students attend regular Wheatley classes. These 10th- to 12th-graders

plan and implement educational policy, take ownership of their own educations, and often teach courses themselves. For more information, e-mail Encounter at holistic@sover.net.

The Spring, 1998, issue of the Public School Montessorian focused on how Montessori education works for underprivileged children in sections entitled "The Homeless," "American Indians," "Children in Poverty/Head Start," and "Non-English Speaking Children." The section on American Indians covered four programs and opportunities being provided for the Isabella Saginaw Chippewa, the Red Cloud Lakota Sioux, the White Mountain Apache, and the Allegheny Seneca students. The issue also included training center profiles, choosing an Internet service provider, and Rebecca Janke's second thoughts on public schools. It is available from Jola Publications, 2933 North 2nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

Home Education News

Issue 121 of Growing Without Schooling contains a contribution from homeschooler Alec Young and his parent, Ronder Thomas Young, describing Alec's decision to begin public school at age 14 so that he could play on the school's basketball team. Alec details those "three miserable weeks" in public school during which he learned that "learning was not the top priority in high school." He decided to leave school without waiting to try out for the team. He says, "I'd felt as if I'd been smothering for three weeks and, all of a sudden, I could breathe again. And draw and read and think again." And, he's playing basketball with a homeschool team that competes with small private schools. The Focus section of the same issue was on "Homeschooling Children with Special Needs." Articles on homeschooling children with post-polio syndrome, autism, and pervasive development disorder, and resources for homeschooling children with special needs are included. GWS, 2269 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140, 617-864-3100.

Points of view in opposition to public charter home study programs are presented in the February-March, 1998, issue of Homefires: The Journal of Homeschooling. Concerns are that such programs will be followed by more regulation on homeschooling in general and that homeschoolers will inevitably be pressured into participating in these programs. One parent commented that in California, homeschoolers who use the Charter Home Study Program no longer participate in their homeschooling groups. Further, many of the parents are becoming dependent on the program teachers to take over their homeschooling activities. Homefires, 180 El Camino Real, Suite 10, Millbrae, CA 94030.

Some of the communications exchanges between Susannah Sheffer, editor of

Growing Without Schooling, and Pam Davis, publisher of Drop Out, were published in GWS issue #122 in an article called "Homeschoolers and Dropouts: Bridging the Gap." In it, the similarities and differences between the two groups and the ways in which they can help each other were explored. Interestingly, Pam notes that "homeschooling ... seems to carry a bigger stigma" than dropping out. She says also that "homeschooling seems usually to be parent initiated while dropping out never is." An enlightening discussion, it is available from Holt Associates, 2269 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140.

In Arizona this past spring, the sixth statewide homeschool graduation took place. Kim McInturff directed the program for the third time, and this year her oldest homeschooling daughter, Mindi, was one of the graduates. The ceremony was presented by the Arizona Families for Home Education at Grace Community Church in Tempe. Kim has been homeschooling her four children since 1989, when the family found they could not afford private school tuition any longer. Mindi is planning on a career as dental assistant or dental hygienist and is a pianist. The article "Homemade Graduation" by Jaye Beeler appeared in the May 4, 1998, issue of the Arizona Republic, P.O. Box 2245, Phoenix, AZ 85002.

The first issue of HomeSchool Dad Magazine appeared in April, 1998. The goal of the magazine is to strengthen families and encourage husbands and wives to work together. It provides information about educational adventures, activities, and teaching methods that kids, dads, and families can enjoy together. The premier issue included articles on the role of a homeschool father, teaching children the value of work, exploring the birthplace of the USA, and much more. For more information, contact editors Jaren and Pamela Green at 609 Starlight Drive, Grand Junction, CO 81504.

The 7th edition of The Home School Manual has been released, written by Theodore E. Wade, Jr., and others. This new edition updates, clarifies, and expands on many of the chapters from previous editions. The introduction includes seven "tours:" suggested chapters which would be most helpful to particular interests or needs, i.e., investigating homeschooling; educating young or preschool kids; teaching high schoolers; teaching children with handicaps; teaching gifted children, etc. Sections cover principles of home education, areas of learning, theory into practice, resource information, and forms for keeping records. It is quite informative and comprehensive, and available from Gazelle Publications, 11580 Red Bud Trail, Berrien Springs, MI 49103, 616-471-4717.

Homeschooling in France

In France, the situation of homeschooling is rather well-defined, compared to other European countries. The law states very clearly that

families can choose the way their child will receive his or her education - either by attending a public or private school, or by receiving the necessary instruction at home (law of March 28, 1882). The law also clarifies that all you have to do if you want to homeschool is to send a letter to the mayor of your place as well as to the regional board of education, either at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the new school year or at most two weeks after you put the child out of school during the school year. It is a right you assume, not a demand you make—something to keep in mind.

Homeschooling is not very common, though—it isn't very well-known that not school but education is compulsory, and many well-meaning friends, family members, or neighbors still think it is illegal, which doesn't make life easier for some families. There are several homeschooling associations who try, among other things, to make the right to homeschool more known and to spread the information in a positive way (media coverage hasn't always been positive up to now, also because of some incidents involving sects that were homeschooling).

One of these organizations is “L'Ecole-la Maison,” created in 1997. Another is “Les Enfants d'Abord,” which has existed since 1991. Their activities range from organizing regional or national meetings for their members to giving legal assistance in case you might have problems with the board of education or some other official authorities. This might happen, as even school boards do not always know that homeschooling is perfectly legal if you just keep in mind certain formal points (like sending the letter announcing your plans to homeschool at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the new school year, etc.). If authorities think you might not be able to give your child a “proper education” —a term open to interpretations—they might try to give you a hard time, ask for your qualification, require a curriculum, etc. But apparently their attitude depends very much on your behavior and living conditions; it seems that families that are judged “marginal” have more problems than “average” ones.

Apart from these associations, there is also a quarterly publication, *Grandir Sans Ecole*, which tries to focus on the practical questions of homeschooling without neglecting general reflections on education and the role of home and family in it.

Estimations concerning the number of homeschooling families are almost impossible to make (there are guesses that cover everything from 400 to 10,000). As homeschoolers have to send their declaration to a regional authority, it does not seem to be recorded on a nationwide level.

Controls are mentioned in the law when the child is 8, 10 and 12 years old. The mayor can have somebody check if the child receives a “proper education” and then can name somebody who examines the child's knowledge on “the three R's” —reading, writing and arithmetic. (The fact that the controls only take place every two years and only cover very basic subjects is a constant point of criticism when homeschooling is being discussed in the public.) If the child is seriously behind his age-mates at school, the

mayor can order certain measures to ameliorate the situation, mostly to send the child to school. In most cases we do not know under which circumstances and in which atmosphere the controls take place and what consequences they have, if any (feedback on this is rare).

If you want more information or have specific questions, please contact one of the following addresses:

Grandir Sans Ecole
Sophie Haesen
B.P. 5, F-68480 Ferrette
Rue, F-38660 Le Touvet
e-mail: huub.haesen@wanadoo.fr
101761.2120@compuserve.com

L'Ecole la Maison
Nadine Stewart
6, Grande

e-mail:

Les Enfants d'Abord

International News and Communications

AUSTRIA

We are members from the Intercollege in Vienna and would like to meet in a chatroom to exchange information and ideas, to make an international journal. We would also like to organise an international diploma of democratic schools. There are already a few suggestions for the form of this diploma; for instance like the Sudbury Valley school diploma, which takes the form of an interview where the candidate shows why he or she is now a responsible person, and our first suggestions, which are included in the appendix. Ben Grafton, schuelerschule@asn.netway.at.

ICELAND

Eiriksinna Kr. Asgrimsdottir lives in Iceland and took Puget Sound Community School's online class on kindness. "At first," she says, "I found it a little absurd to sit on this island in the middle of the Atlantic and receive kindness assignments from a complete stranger somewhere in the world." But, liking absurdity, she completed the assignments and learned a lot about the kindness of Americans. She is now facilitating an online class on "The Runes of the Vikings," a self-taught subject for her. PSCS, 10220 NE 1st Place #201, Bellevue, WA 98004, 425-455-7617, e-mail: pscs@pscs.org, website: www.pscs.org.

BELGIUM Paul Aerts wrote, "I received your e-mail address from Anna Gador of the Rogers School in Budapest. She refers to you as the organiser of conferences about Democratic Schools. I know Anna since 1992. I have visited her school in 1992 and last year she was here to visit some alternative schools in Antwerp. I am involved in teacher education. For this reason, I am interested in all kinds of school reforms." He works in the Department of Teacher Education at the Karel de Grote-Hogeschool

(Charlemain University of Professional Education), and sent us some information on Experiential Education in Flanders/Belgium. This project started as a study by 12 Flemish preschool teachers and two educational consultants of the ways in which young children learn. The result was a new paradigm for preschool, which has become one of the most influential innovations of the last decade in Europe. The foundation is the experiential attitude of the teacher, upon which three principles are implemented: child initiative, enriched environment, and experiential dialogue. These principles serve two processes: therapeutic changes and developmental changes. The result is an emancipated person, the final goal. For more information, contact Prof. Dr. F. Laevers, Research Centre for Early Childhood and Primary Education, Vesaliusstraat 2, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium. "It is striking that the number of alternative schools is gradually increasing in Flanders; so this must mean that more and more parents are not pleased by how the ordinary schools work." Paul Aerts, Jachthoornlaan 76, B-2970 Schilde, Belgium, phone/fax: 32-(0)3-658-4457, e-mail: aerts@glo.be.

CANADA

From April 3-5, QPIRG Concordia University in Montreal hosted the 8th Continental Conference on Social Ecology: Education and Social Ecology. Social ecology integrates the study of human and natural ecosystems through understanding the interrelationships of culture and nature. The conference explored the history and practice of modern education with its relationship to capitalism and hierarchy, contrasting it to an educational practice whose goals are social freedom and municipal direct democracy. Michael Caplan, 2130 Mackay, room 101, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 2J1, e-mail: QPIRG@alcor.concordia.ca, website: <http://www.tao.ca/~ise/>.

A fourth economic wave has been emerging among "eco-preneurs" that "defies the laws of economic gravity by finding footholds in tiny niches." The fourth-wave paradigm embraces "diversity, interdependence, co-evolution, and balance in healthy ecosystems and markets alike." In *Get a Life!* Wayne Roberts and Susan Brandum describe this paradigm and how it came to be, and present 101 examples of how it is being achieved. The ten key principles of fourth-wave economics are all outlined, complete with many examples, in this book. It is available from Get a Life Publishing House, 2255B Queen Street East, Suite 127, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1G3, 416-669-6070.

ENGLAND (DENMARK)

Derry Hannam writes:

Well done for all your hard work on the Stork School conference. I hope that it goes really well and Deborah and I are very sorry that we cannot attend. (The first Hadera conference that I have missed.) The international secretary of the Danish School Students organisation was interested when I

told her about the conference. Her name is Binh Pham--she is from Vietnam, speaks fluent Danish, and has just got the highest marks in the country for her English examination. She is, as you would say, 'quite a cookie!' I have suggested that she get in touch with you. She is passionately committed to making schools more democratic and, of course, she has a lot of official backing in Denmark, where the new education law has given pupil councils equal status with teachers councils in Danish upper folk schools (11-16 years). Sadly though, the progressive minister of education has not been re-elected to the parliament.

There are signs of progress in England at last, with some good people working on a new group advising the new education minister on the importance of student participation in school decision-making. I hope to have a modest input and am a keynote speaker at a conference in Scotland with minister's adviser in May. That in itself is fairly amazing, as I am accustomed to being regarded as a freak/crank/(maniac even!), even though I survive as an inspector (also to my amazement). exxdhh@bath.ac.uk.

Over 100 years ago, Edmond Holmes was the senior chief inspector of England's first National Curriculum. He wrote a manuscript in which he admitted to being ashamed of having participated in a system that he believed had become debased. The manuscript was mistakenly included for publication with some of his other works, and consequently created an uproar. He asserted that teaching was nothing more than rote-learning and that educators were merely drill sergeants. A book has been written by Chris Shute called Edmond Holmes and "The Tragedy of Education." It is available from Educational Heretics Press, 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ, United Kingdom.

FINLAND

I am an American in Finland. I attended the Randolph School in Wappingers Falls, NY--an incredible school that is still going strong (<http://www.randolph-school.org/>). How does one go about locating interesting, progressive, alternative schools around the globe? I would be grateful for any contacts you have or suggestions for the job search. Bobbi Berenbaum, bobbib@sci.fi, Aapelinkatu 6 E 63, 02230 Espoo, Suomi, Finland.

JAPAN

According to an article by Mick Corliss in The Japan Times (January 8, 1998), the dropout and truancy rate in Japan is rapidly increasing due to an almost complete lack of alternatives to the rigid public school system. Since 1992, however, the government has begun to allow alternatives such as Tokyo Shure Free School and the Denmark Farm Home for Kids to provide education for school "refusers" (now referred to more often as "nonattenders"). Support schools, which assist dropouts in acquiring a diploma via correspondence courses, are also on the rise. Homeschooling, however, is still not permitted, as Japan doesn't recognize the right of

parents to choose how their children are educated.

NETHERLANDS-RUSSIA

Two times a year I give courses in Nishni Novgorod, Russia, on teaching in a non-traditional way. That means the activity is shifted from the teacher to the pupil. My teaching is based on Montessori. I am working for the Center of Valeology in Nishni Novgorod. "Valeology" concerns all the preventive aspects of health at school, physically as well as mentally. They think I teach them an attitude of the teacher towards children and towards learning that suits their aims. At the moment they focus on the education of kindergarten teachers. They pay much attention to the development of movement, especially the refined movements of the hand, and to the correct posture of the body by means of training programs. Also the emotional and social development is in the center of attention. They have special programs by which the little pupils train these abilities, for instance by playing a story or Russian fairy tale, that suits the purpose. Each pupil acts as a personage of the story and experiences in this way how to behave in a social and emotional way. They strive toward the integration of these attitude of building up and maintaining health in the pupils into every normal school curriculum and into the skills of every teacher.

They are in search for schools with these aspects of upbringing as a main point in their education. The reason of this letter to you is to ask if you know such schools in the USA, schools at kindergarten level based on special ideas on health in education. Please let me know! I tried to find them in The Netherlands in vain. As far as I know, they also don't exist in Germany or elsewhere in Western Europe. The director of the Center of Valeology in Nishni Novgorod, Ludmila Filipovva, is eager to make contact with such schools. Lies van Donselaar, pkeuch@abma.nl, Hasebroeklaan 1, 3723 DJ Bilthoven, Holland.

MAYLASIA

I have just read your article on school governance and empowerment and feel inspired to comment from Malaysia. As an educationist from the UK and having lived here for 14 years, it is all too apparent that schools and colleges here are failing students in numerous ways. First of all, there is the model of democracy as embodied in the government (an authoritarian variant) and this variety cascades down through the ministries to the chalk face where teachers are (or perceive themselves to be) so disempowered and underpaid that they may prefer to concentrate their energies on earning money through a second job such as insurance sales. Naturally, the students, too, feel disempowered—only now, with the consequences of rapid industrialization and urbanization, do leaders see both the negative consequences in the form of anomie, disaffection, violent, and anti-social behavior we've typically experienced for years in the UK, and the need for committed, empowered, self-directed learners to enter the workforce of the multi-media super corridor—a national vision/project to lead the country

into the next millennium. The paradoxes stare us in the face, yet the authoritarian controls, say on publishing, printing, and free speech, continue to be visibly exercised. In response to this evident need is the emergence of elite educational institutions in which attempts at super learning and SMART, technologically oriented learning is being attempted.

In our current economic crisis the need for solutions for the future is even more urgent. Adversity, as is often the case, could then be the catalyst for dramatic change. I have joined the staff of a non-profit-making community college (funded by the community), which has just started up specifically to serve the students from the 60 Chinese independent schools here. The commitment of the staff and students to making this a success in many different ways is very high, yet the particular character of the institution is yet to evolve.

Your article and your comments on Summerhill struck me as interesting because there is a real sense of the need for reform in the Chinese independent schools here, but the direction has not yet evolved. The college can play a powerful role in influencing this direction, both in terms of research and training, but chiefly in terms of creating new models. Your comments, too, about learning from the Indians is interesting—the question, though, in Chinese tradition, is perhaps rediscovering these elements from among the mind-body holistic proponents and the links to larger organic organizational forms. In reality, patriarchal, hierarchical elements still remain dominant, though these may be accompanied by powerful philosophies which could be very progressive if lived and exercised. That's what I mean about evolving—as recipes from elsewhere often are inappropriate.

What is important, though, is to examine your examples in more detail, for that may inspire others here. So I would be interested in obtaining more details and examples especially at secondary- and tertiary-level institutions. I would also be interested in your use of teaching methodologies in these examples and specifically if you have applied any accelerative learning and or NLP techniques.

I hope your current projects are giving you as much joy as that one obviously did. Anne Munro-Kua, annekua@pc.jaring.my.

MEXICO

I am very interested in starting a Waldorf-type school. However, I'd like the material in Spanish. I'd like it for Mexicans and Americans and to be bi-lingual. It would also be for the benefit of my daughter. I had a terrible experience with a Montessori-style school here that offered more creativity but no academics. I keep her going now through the Oak Meadow School, a Waldorf-style homeschool curriculum. There are a lot of frustrated Mexican parents who would like their children's educations to be more creative. I do believe Mexico needs this type of creativity if they are to survive into the 21st Century. Dedee Memmi, galydee@1cabonet.com.mx, A.P. 365 Cabo San Lucas 23410 BCS, Mexico.

PHILIPPINES

There are quite a number of progressive schools here in the Philippines. My school (Creative Edge Preschool) has been using this approach for almost seven years now. There are other schools such as The Community of Learners and The Learning Tree. I just finished my diploma course at the University of the Philippines, and they have a laboratory preschool (U.P. Child Development Center) which uses the same approach too. They offer a Master's Degree but it includes courses on family life, too, and it's not that comprehensive. The "child development" aspect of it is actually the diploma course which includes a practicum for one semester. My school is a member of the ACEI. Have you heard of it? Last year the ACEI Convention was held here in the Philippines and it was very successful and educational too. A lot of teachers look forward to seminars on relevant topics such as E.Q. and Multiple Intelligence. Tracy Socco, 17 Banaba St. Proj. 3 1102 QC, Philippines (home), or 28 Ricardo St. Carmel I Subd. Proj.6 QC, Philippines (school).

TRINADAD

We opened our doors in January, and we currently have an enrollment of 12 students ranging in ages three to eight. We are hoping to increase the number to 36 to 40 children by January, 1999, and increase the age group to include children nine years old. Christopher Chin Lee, cchinlee@gtsl.com, 10 Nook Avenue, St. Ann's, Trinidad, West Indies, 868-624-1181 (ext. 2400), fax: 868-624-0108.

Teachers, Jobs, and Internships

Blue Mountain School, a 15 year-old, parent-run, cooperative school, is looking to fill several teaching positions for September 1998. We are dedicated to providing an enriching, holistic education for children from pre-school through middle school. School is home-like; studies are child-cued; surrounding environment is rural/small town. Interested? Send resume to BMS, 470 Christiansburg Pike NE, Floyd, VA 24091-3737.

I'm an English/history teacher in Connecticut who's worked for several years in experiential/democratic education programs. We're trying to start a Sudbury-based school in Litchfield County (western Connecticut) to open in the Fall of 1999, and are looking for more volunteers for our Founder's Group. We need parents, especially parents with legal or fundraising experience. Donors are also especially welcome, as we would like to raise enough capital to buy instead of rent, if possible. The school, to be called the Housatonic Valley Community School, will offer a Sudbury-type program for older elementary and secondary students. For more information please call Laura Webber at 203-794-9065, or e-mail wwebby@aol.com.

The Schuelerschule and Inter-College in central Vienna needs a native

speaker with alternative/democratic school experience from September to December, 1998. The person should preferably have experience in English-language teaching and other areas for project teaching and sport; be flexible enough to fit into a friendly, experienced, "dynamic" team of six teachers; and be prepared to attend teacher's meetings and supervision. Knowledge of German is not a necessity; in fact a non-German speaker would be preferable. Respect for the rights and personalities of young people is a prerequisite. The school is about 25 years old, for students from ten to 17 years, based on democratic principles, and follows its own student-centered and project-based curriculum. Wage per month: \$ 850-1,000 for a 3-4 day week. Accommodations available from July-December: very quiet, two-bedroom apartment on the edge of Vienna woods, 20 minutes by tram to center, \$300 per month (excl. telephone, gas, and electric). Two references required. Contact Ben Wunsch-Grafton, schuelerschule@asn.netway.at, phone/fax: 0043-1-489-9346.

Editor's note: 16 students and three parent-staff members from the school recently visited Jerry Mintz at the AERO offices as part of their tour of alternative schools in the United States.

A new school for children ages five to 18 has been established in Maui. The Maui Sudbury School is based on the principle that children are naturally curious and self-motivated. They are free to direct their time and energy in pursuit of their own interests. There are no grades, no tests, no age-based classes, no assessments, and class attendance is voluntary. Its founders group is trying to find people to serve on its staff. The school's address is 4150 Hana Highway, Haiku, HI 96708, 808-573-1819, e-mail: Liz@maui.net.

Diablo Valley School, a democratic Sudbury-style school, needs a few more staff. We opened our school with three students and four part-time staff in January of 1997, and we now have six students and four part-time staff and are growing! We are located in Concord, California (San Francisco East Bay), near public transit. We do not anticipate paying our staff unless we get a huge increase in enrollment or a bequest. This takes time and commitment to the democratic philosophy. If you are interested, please read about Sudbury Valley School and visit our website: <http://diablo.lexica.net/dvs/>. If you are STILL interested, contact diavllly@aol.com. Thanks! Angela Sevin.

The National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools needs two good people. Positions Available are:

1. External Affairs Coordinator: minimum of five years teaching or related work, two years in an alternative setting, grant-writing experience, office/administrative experience, views education as liberation, experience in grant development, freedom to travel.
2. Internal Affairs Coordinator: knowledge of and willingness to uphold the

tenets of the NCACS, experience in alternative education, two years fiscal experience, budgeting, computer fluency, office management skills, views education as liberation, regional activities.

Direct inquiries/resumes for the position to NCACS Search, Clonlara School, 1289 Jewett Street, Ann Arbor MI 48109. Resumes accepted now to July, 1998.

Clonlara School is looking for a teacher to work with their campus students in the early elementary/ elementary classroom. "We are very interested in someone who has experience teaching and experience teaching in alternative schools/programs. Must be interested in team teaching. Clonlara is one of the oldest alternative schools of its kind in the country. This past school year there were 50 campus students ranging in age from five to 18 years, with three teachers and one teacher aide. It is an ungraded school. They are in younger, middle, and older student groupings. Parents are very involved in the life of the school." Send written introductory materials to Clonlara School, Teacher Search, 1289 Jewett, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, 313-769-4511, clonlara@delphi.com.

The Venice Community School is seeking teachers for the following programs: Discovery (ages four to seven), Explorer (ages eight to 13), and Mastery (ages 14 to 18). Responsibilities include program coordination, collaborative teaching in a student-directed environment, and community building. Please write Amy Cooke, 31191 Road 180, Visalia, CA 93292, or call 209-594-6704 or 209-592-4999.

Gesundheit Institute is building an experimental hospital in an eco-village context in West Virginia in an effort to address health-care delivery problems. They are looking for two teachers who would like to help create a school at the communal hospital. All staff will live at the facility. Contact Patch Adams, 6855 Washington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22213.

Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is in its second year with 105 children ages eight to 16. The school is looking for an innovative educational leader with a history of successful leadership in a progressive school environment and proven experience in the development and implementation of project-based curriculum, staff development, and teacher evaluation. Send resume, statement of interest, and three letters of reference to Ms. Nelia Decker, President MVPCS, P.O. Box 546, West Tisbury, MA 02575, 508-693-9900, fax: 508-696-9008, or Rufus W. Peebles, P.O. Box 338, West Tisbury, MA 02575.

The Department of Education of Antioch New England Graduate School is accepting applications for three full-time faculty positions. These positions will begin July 1, 1998. For more information on each of the positions contact Antioch at 40 Avon Street, Keene, NH 03431-3516,

603-357-3122.

The November, 1997, News: Schools for Tomorrow reported that the Children's Village School (Moo Ban Dek) in Thailand is looking for an English teacher to work there for a year. There is no salary, but board and lodging are provided. Contact the school at 0171-487-3139.

The Renaissance School is a small, progressive elementary school in Lakeland, FL. Lakeland is between Tampa and Orlando. The school is a public charter school. The school has an opening for a "master teacher" to teach a small mixed-age class of K-2 graders. Annual salary is \$26,000 plus benefits. Applicants should be degreed and have experience in a progressive teaching environment (learner-directed, student-paced, authentic assessment). For more information contact Jean Bias, bias@gate.net, or fax your resume to 941-701-1046.

Chuck Estrin sent us this: Long established, academically focused small Seattle public high school that values shared decision-making and personalized education seeks passionate teachers certified in math, LA, science, or social studies. Minorities encouraged to apply. Contact: The Nova Project, 2410 East Cherry Street, Seattle, WA 98122, 206-726-6730, e-mail: chuck@novaproj.org, website: <http://www.novaproj.org>.

We have an opening at the Community School for a weekend, camping trip, outdoorsy kind of person who likes teenagers and is willing to work in a mostly consensus-based decision model among the faculty with eight former high-school dropouts, in a residence in Camden, Maine. The school has been going for 24 years now, and is a fascinating and challenging place to work. Pay starts at about \$16,000 with benefits. Please send resume to Lauri Donleavy, The Community School, Box 555, Camden, ME 04843, 207-236-3000, e-mail: cschool@community.pvt.k12.me.us.

Teachers Looking for Jobs in Alternative Schools

Jennifer Shulman, jen052974: I am looking to work in an alternative school, preferably in Brooklyn. I want the school to be a "school without walls" and integrate nature programs and drama studies, meditation, and art, and to take the emphasis away from the desk and podium.

Andy Frank is interested in a position with a democratic, secondary-level program involving themes of ecological sustainability, active citizenry, and experiential learning. He has a degree in chemical engineering and graduate work in environmental science, secondary education, and school counseling. He is currently working as a project coordinator for an environmental non-profit coalition and can be reached by email: landrew.jf@worldnet.att.net, or phone: 716-759-1412.

Corrie Tait is looking for employment in an alternative school. She has her B.Ed from McGill University (Montreal, Canada) in elementary education and has extensive experience working with children with special needs and teaching environmental education. She is interested in educational reform and would love to work in an alternative setting. Would be interested in an internship position as well. Please contact her at qpirg@alcor.concordia.ca. or call 514-840-8795.

Julie Berry, jgunn@gowebway.com: What a wonderful surprise to find this website. I have just had a most disappointing experience with public education in a northeastern suburb of Indianapolis. I am very interested in hearing about alternative education in this area but the resources appear to be hidden. I am a career educator and returned to the US 6 months ago after living and working in Australia for over 25 years. What has happened to public education in the US? I am looking for work in an enlightened organization!

Bobbi B., bobbib@sci.fi: I'm an American teacher living and working in Finland. I attended an alternative school as a child, and did my M.S.Ed. in early childhood and elementary education at Bank Street College, NYC. I'm interested in teaching in an alternative school in a country other than the USA or Finland, to broaden both my personal and professional experiences.

A substitute teacher with 10 years public and private school experience is looking for a full-time position, particularly in an alternative school. Farrell Winter has taught students ages three to 18 and is willing to relocate. He can be reached at Box 11, Graton, CA 95444, 707-829-3763.

Philip Ross has developed an innovative curriculum called World Music in Schools that teaches young people how to perform rhythm music while learning about the music and lifeways of cultures around the world. The program integrates performing arts and social studies, along with science, math, and instrument making, to provide a full appreciation of the world of music. Philip Ross has a B. A. in anthropology and has been offering his program in schools for the past seven years. He is currently seeking a teaching position or internship in an alternative school in the San Francisco Bay area. Philip Ross, songo1@pacbell.net, 5521 Volkerts Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472, 707-823-0369.

A quite willing, able, and promising addition to your free school/alternative school staff. Montessori teaching experience. Unschooling network/resource center volunteer--(Genius Tribe, Eugene, OR). Various tutoring of high-school and middle-school students. Mary Simons, 21 Fuller Road, Trumbull, CT 06611, 203-261-3685.

I am a teacher looking for alternative school employment opportunities. I live in Colorado now but will be relocating to Utah within the year. While I was studying education at Brigham Young University I was very interested in alternative education and I am excited to find your page. Good job!--
Marjohna K. Madsen, marjohna@compuserve.com.

I am a social studies-teacher at an at-risk charter school in Middleton, WI. Alas, the school I teach at is not as innovative as I would have hoped coming out of my second year of teaching. Does anyone have any teaching openings for a dynamic social-studies teacher who wants to focus on learning (like the progressive schools of the '30's)? --John Ivens, 2098 Springdale Center Road, Verona, WI 53593, e-mail: guano26@hotmail.com.

Joe Darak is a graduate of Duquesne University with PA certification in secondary social studies. He is looking for employment in an alternative school. "As a teenager, they threw me out of high school for leading a student democracy movement. As an adult certified teacher I'm still at it. I prefer a rural setting but will consider relocating anywhere." Contact Joe Darak at 777 1/2 Chestnut Street, Coraopolis, PA 15108, 412-269-2694.

I am seeking employment in a holistic public school as an elementary teacher and willing to travel nearly anywhere. I am interested in schools especially for low socioeconomic children, and in the Pacific Northwest. Anyone have any leads? In regards to holistic education, has anyone read Ken Wilber and considered the implications of his work? --Brad Kose, 151 East Oakland Ave, Columbus, OH 43201, 614-421-9328, e-mail: kose.1@osu.edu.

From the AERO Web Site

Note: AERO now has a new domain, courtesy of the Foundry, which is a non-profit adjunct to the Speakeasy Cafe in Seattle. It is <http://www.edrev.org>

E-mail addresses are: jmintz@iris.nyit.edu, jmintz@igc.apc.org, and JerryAERO@AOL.com

If you would like to join the alternative education listserve, send an e-mail message to majordomo@speakeasy.org. Leave the subject line blank, and in the body type "subscribe altsch"

Julie Wiley, jwiley@lycosmail.com:

I am the director of development for the Annunziata Tutorial Center, an alternative school for at-risk youth (specifically, those who have been expelled from other schools in the system). The ATC does not operate in the traditional "boot camp" fashion. Rather, we have a more holistic approach and try to address the social and psychological issues that may have led to the poor choices of these young people. We are looking for new information and other models, 2011 Acadian Drive, Houma, LA 70363,

504-876-2971.

Kathleen Sanbento, BREEZE1049@msn.com:

I am interested in receiving a copy of your newsletter. My family and I are homeschoolers. We are always interested in hearing about other homeschooling families, and having dialogue about alternatives concerning educational lifestyles.

Sarah M. Munson, phscot@swbell.net:

I am trying to organize a homebased educational co-op in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, area. Would like to see it really fill the needs of parents who have to work (single parents/welfare moms) and ill children who cannot attend school for one reason or another. Would definitely be unschooling in practice. Am just looking for sources and information on which to build. I don't want to reinvent the wheel, but want to have an answer for all those parents who say, "I would if I could but..."

Angela Sevin, markangela@value.net:

I work at a private, nonprofit, democratically run school in Concord, California. There are no classes, grades, or set curriculum—just self-directed learning in an equal vote, equal opportunity community made up of staff and students. Sudbury Valley School is our model (they started in 1968).

Posey Nelson, nelson@gunnison.com:

I would really like some information on what it takes to set up an alternative school, a community school with less emphasis on discipline and being pigeonholed and way more influence and emphasis on the joy of learning and a tolerant and fun learning environment. We have several interested families, one interested teacher, and a possible space. We just don't know how to proceed. Does anyone out there on this site have advice?

Crystal:

I think that making students wear uniforms is just insane. We do not believe in dressing alike but we believe in expressing ourselves and being creative. We are all different and we each have our own opinions about how we like to dress. There are some advantages to wearing uniforms, but there are also advantages in wearing what we choose. Think about it. Maybe you will find the answer.

John Alejado, jalejado@hei.com:

Just surfed in from Hawaii and Boy! are my arms tired! No, not really, I just listened to you on Bob Hogue's Show in Honolulu, HI. Thanks for the good info you shared. Homeschooling is growing more and more in Hawaii and we anticipate further interest as a result of your being on Bob's Show. Aloha and Mahalo! John and Arleen Alejado, Christian Homeschoolers of

Hawaii.

Ron Miller, milleron@together.net:

In the last AEROGRAMME you printed my announcement about my book on the history of the free-school movement. So far, I haven't received responses from anyone who might be able to help my research by loaning old newsletters, press clippings, or any information about conferences and meetings held between 1967 and 1973. Maybe people will find it easier to respond via e-mail. I look forward to hearing from folks involved in alternative education back in the '60s. I hope to have the book done in a few more months. Best wishes, Ron Miller.

Mark Strickler, mstrickl@pen.k12.va.us:

I am searching for examples of high schools that deliver instruction by means of an interdisciplinary model/approach—any and all related info.

Norma Andes, nandes@juno.com:

Interested in starting an alternative school in Southeastern Virginia area (or finding one if it exists)! Would like to correspond with anyone interested in similar ideas. I Am homeschooling now with two small children (in an unschooling sort of way). I'm finding it hard to find others in this area who trust their children's abilities to learn without rewards or outside-imposed structure. Anyone have networking ideas or want to talk?

Lisa Bodecker, lisab@sfsu.edu:

Interested parents in Montessori homeschooling for preschool through elementary are welcome to visit our homepage, <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/lisab>, or sign up for our free Montessori newsletter and brochure by e-mailing us. We also have an online bookstore with Montessori and homeschool books.

Mary, foolshill@worldnet.att.net:

How wonderful to find this site! The education of young people is my passion and lifelong work. Writing is a close second! New ideas and creativity are right there, too, so this site fascinates me. I am a believer and practitioner of alternative education. My school district does not yet have an alternative school, but there is hope. Meanwhile, I continue to develop and implement learning activities and strategies that involve my students in relevant, meaningful experiences. I believe in different learning styles, hands-on application of knowledge, unstifled curiosity, learner-centered, positive classrooms, and the power of respect and responsibility. Thank you for your efforts!

Michael Velez, mvelez@busd.k12.ca.us:

I am seeking resources in order to help develop a program for students who have been expelled or transferred due to habitual truancy, fighting, or

poor classroom behavior. My school is an alternative school for grades five to 12 and I am getting a little frustrated at how difficult it is to change student behavior. If any one who reads this has any suggestions please e-mail me.

Michele Bernier, mbern@aloha.net:

I am interested in any information pertaining to alternative schools for emotionally impaired youth from grades one to six. In Hawaii, the State Departments of Education and Health are under a Federal court-ordered consent decree to supply free and appropriate services to SPED and 504 children, and we are having a rough time of it. Often we are faced with dangerous situations and do not have the training or facilities to deal with this. Are there any alternative programs out there that may be able to share your ideas about how you got started, etc.? Great web site!

Chamba and Amy Cooke, ChambaStar@AOL or AmyCooke@AOL:

Hi from the Venice Community School in Visalia, California. We have been another struggling "free or alternative school." We learned a bunch of hard lessons our first year as VCS (we were Educare previously and just out of our house) and have taken a brake to regroup and start up again. All is looking rather good. What an exciting web page! We welcome visits and letters.

Cindy Wade, cwade@vermontel.com:

I didn't know about this site and newsletter. Wished I knew sooner to put you into the VT Homeschooler's Directory under resources. Would like to find out more about non-compliance from your readers. Am a non-compliant unschooling mom with two wonderful children ages 11 and seven.

Rick Pressler, rpressler@aol.com, Greater Brunswick Charter School:

I came to your site hoping to find a resource for locating teachers with alternative education experience. I'm part of a new charter school in New Jersey with a program based on child-directed learning, democratic governance, parental involvement, and community activism. We're in the process of hiring staff, and we're having trouble finding people with constructivist and/or Montessori experience. I'd appreciate any suggestions about how we might attract such folks, or where they might be reachable online.

Freja Joslin, frejaaz@aztec.asu.edu:

I am a Prescott College student dedicating my life to finding ways of allowing children the freedom and support to learn in their own ways. I recently designed a special topics in education course at my school. For a few weeks in January of 1999, I, the instructor, and between six and 12 students will travel to the San Francisco Bay Area (and the surrounding areas) in order to visit an array of public, private, and independent

“alternative” schools. As the teaching assistant and the creator of this class, I get to determine which schools we will visit. Personally, I am most interested in Sudbury Valley School models and very unique schools. I have received brochures from dozens of such schools and have now been faced with the hardship of choosing ten. Is there anyone who knows of a must-see school in that area? If so, please contact me with your suggestions. Also, I would love to set up correspondence with anyone who wants to talk. 812 First Street, Prescott, AZ 86301, 520-778-0617.

Amy Hudepohl, hudepoav@muohio.edu:

I’m from the Center for Chemical Education, housed at Miami University Middletown (Ohio). We’re a non-profit group that provides opportunities for professional development for educators, curriculum development, student programming, networking, and educational materials development. We just returned from the 1998 Pittcon (the Pittsburgh Conference of Analytical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy), where we met a handful of homeschool families. They suggested that we have a booth at a regional and/or national homeschool convention. Does anyone have any info on upcoming conferences that we might attend?

Leahanne McCloskey, Leahanne_McCloskey@ideas.sdhc.k12.fl.us:

I’d love to start my own homeschooling program. Has anyone out there tried it? If you have any information could you please head me in the right direction? I am currently a 6th-year teacher, I have taught in a variety of settings and age levels (elementary). I’d appreciate any information that you could offer!

Dmitry Golovin, seldet@glas.apc.org, School of Self-Determination, Moscow, Russia: Hi! Jerry! We so glad to see your homepage! In this year we plan to prepare own homepage!

Special Section:

CHANGING SCHOOLS

_____Since 1973: The Journal of Alternative
Education_____

Announcing:

The 1998 International Alternative Education Conference
Chapman University
Orange, California June 25-27

Sponsored by LEARN and the Orange County Department of Education
Join us in beautiful Southern California for an extra-special conference

event!

We'll focus on our students as unique learners--spotlight success in reaching out to them.

This year's special focus is technology--a proven motivator and powerful creativity and learning tool!

Alternative Education students are finding more options and opportunities than ever!

You can bring the world to your students!

Learn the latest from the kids!

Participate in live video conferencing!

For more information and direct notification, write to Susan Condrey, International Alternative Education Conference Information, 16490 Harbor Blvd., Suite B, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, e-mail: susan_condrey@ocde.k12.ca.us, 714-418-0303, website: www.ocde.k12.ca.us/learn.

1998 International Alternative Education Conference, "Connecting for Success!"

This three-day conference is an exciting opportunity for administrators, teachers, parents, students, mentors, service organizations and agencies, law enforcement, and all who are excited about connecting for success, and the programs that make it happen!

Conference Strands:

Technology in the 21st Century
Alternative Ways to Facilitate Learning
Critical Life Skills for Our Future
Diversity & Equity in the Global Community
Resiliency--Overcoming Drug & Gang Influences

Conference Strand Highlights (just a few...)

Technology in the 21st Century: "Opening Doors" Susan Condrey and Orange County Department of Education's Single Gender Academies
"Your Single Gender Academies have saved my two kids' lives...and I wanted you to know," said a single mother to Orange County superintendent of schools, Dr. John F. Dean. California Governor Pete Wilson believes the

program in Fountain Valley is “genuinely inspiring,” and adds that it “provides real opportunities and real hope... a very different garden in which students can take root and bloom.” This model alternative program uses technology in every aspect of student learning and connects the classroom to the world.

“Nuts and Bolts of Digital Video” Hall Davidson, executive director, Educational Services & Telecommunications, KOCE-TV
Explore tools that pull camcorders, VCRs, and television programs into computer applications. Edit on a standard computer and print to a VCR. Integrate technology into learning... comfortably. Hall Davidson has trained thousands of teachers in the use of technology in the classroom. His numerous awards include an Emmy for Best Instructional television series, and a Golden Disk Award from Computer Using Educators (CUE). He is coordinator of the California Student Media and Multimedia Festival and a founding member of the EduROCK site on the World Wide Web.

Alternative Ways to Facilitate Learning: “Limitless Connections” Doug McPhee, author of *Limitless Learning & Administrator Vision 2020*
Make powerful learning an everyday event. Unlock success through accelerated learning techniques. Learn eight major keys to enhance learning. Doug McPhee is president of Edge Enterprises, a multi-faceted training and development firm that provides products, training and instructional design in accelerated learning for businesses and schools around the world.

Critical Life Skills for Our Future: “Thinking As a Skill” Susan Mackie, cognitive development specialist, South Africa
“Susan Mackie is probably the most experienced trainer in the world in the teaching of thinking skills in education and industry,” according to Edward de Bono. Thinking is a skill, and one that can be improved. Using Edward de Bono’s “lateral thinking” techniques, Mackie has trained thousands to develop broader, more expansive thinking, better problem-solving, added creativity, and more effective thinking, no matter what the context.

Diversity & Equity in the Global Community: “From Hate to Harmony” Erin Gruwell & The Freedom Writers. Recently featured on ABC’s Primetime Live with Sam Donaldson and Connie Chung and just awarded a book contract from Doubleday, these Long Beach students and their passionate teacher are setting out to eliminate hate. The Diary of Anne Frank and Zlata’s Diary (an 11 year-old girl’s Bosnian war record) motivated these students to share their own voices in their goal to promote tolerance, respect, and understanding.

Resiliency–Overcoming Drug & Gang Influences: “Back to the Future: The Hood: The Final Frontier” John Pollard, “The Peacemaker,” expert on gang &

youth violence prevention & intervention.

Positive and uplifting message of hope, cooperation, unity, and peace.

“The Peacemaker” has inspired people of all ages, races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and economic locations.

Democratic Decision-Making in Public Education: Jerry Mintz, AERO

Jerry Mintz recently brought nine students and two teachers from Albany’s Free School on a 3,500-mile drive to help the Renaissance School, a charter school in Florida. The group demonstrated democratic decision-making process, as well as offering classes taught by the 12- to 15-year-old students in the group. Jerry will show a video that the group made of this process, and then discuss the variety of ways in which democratic decision-making processes can be brought into the public school classroom. If enough students attend and want to participate, he will demonstrate the process at the conference.

The Work of Reuven Feuerstein

E-mail note by Carl H. Levi, CHL01@zianet.com

I’m one of Bob Barr’s former students. I was involved in starting the first public alternative school in Bloomington (Monroe County AHS) and left there to start Shiprock Alternative HS on the Navajo Reservation many years ago. I did some of the first covers for Changing Schools magazine when it was housed at Indiana University, and have been involved with and/or maintained an interest in alternative education since meeting Bob Barr, Vern Smith, Jerry Smith, and Tom Gregory as a grad student in the first alternative ed seminar at IU in 1972.

I want to tell you about the 4th Annual International Teaching for Intelligence Conference. Professor Reuven Feuerstein was a presenter.

Feuerstein has spent better than fifty years at his institute in Jerusalem developing what is far and away the most genuinely effective program in existence for developing basic cognitive functions. Gardner and others have developed catchier ways of dealing with the development of thinking skills and intelligence, but Reuven’s is the most basic and thoroughly proven. He has developed both a dynamic assessment method known as the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD), and a cognitive skills development program known as Instrumental Enrichment (IE). I know of no other program that produces such profound, lasting changes in an individual’s capacity to learn. It is in use all over the world, but, because it is not a “quick fix”—at least by most people’s standards—and because it requires serious training and dedication in order to effectively implement it, it has not been as widely adopted as it deserves to be.

Feuerstein’s work is something that can be used by anyone willing to take the training and do the work necessary to implement it. It can be used in

any sort of educational setting, from public alternatives to homeschooling to you name it. Originally designed to be implemented over three years, it has been very effectively condensed into a two-year program that essentially enables an individual to thoroughly develop basic cognitive skills and truly develop intelligence to it's full potential. And while, as alternative educators, we may already accept the idea that virtually everyone's potential is far greater than is usually recognized, Reuven Feuerstein has given us a way to fully and effectively realize that potential. While he started out working with low-functioning adolescents, his methods are incredibly effective with all learners, and have even helped improve the thinking skills of research scientists. They essentially involve the use of very carefully designed paper-and-pencil exercises—the “instruments” –together with carefully structured but genuinely open-ended instructional techniques designed to thoroughly develop the most basic cognitive functions and problem-solving skills.

Perhaps the best thing to tell you is that the Instrumental Enrichment program gives dedicated teachers the ability to enable students to fully realize their potential for learning. It literally teaches them HOW TO THINK, not WHAT to think. Then they can fully and effectively learn whatever they wish, for the rest of their lives.

There's all sorts of literature, and you can access it through SkyLight Training and Publishing at <http://www.iriskylight.com> and pull up the item “Instrumental Enrichment/Mediated Learning.” SkyLight is sort of a slick training organization, but it is serious about improving education, and just happens to be the primary source in the US for disseminating Feuerstein's work.

Explanation of Jonesville and Springfield Massacres

The following editorial was broadcast on the Education Revolution Radio Show, hosted by Jerry Mintz, on the Talk America Network, Sunday, May 25th at 9 PM. The show may be heard on the Internet at www.talkamerica.com, or on www.realaudio.com.

Everybody seems quite perplexed by the shootings by children of children in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Springfield, Oregon, and several other places. But the shootings aren't so hard to understand, and they do have some things in common. I don't think that the primary factors are accessibility to guns or the responsible instruction on the use of guns.

One thing these incidents have in common are that they happened in public schools, not in the mall or at McDonalds. I think that the causes have to do with a culture in which life is very frustrating and anger-producing for children in today's schools and in their homes. Furthermore, children and, subsequently, adults do not learn how to adequately and

effectively express their anger, make decisions, deal with problems, and take responsibility for their educations and their lives, in order to effectively meet their own needs.

Essentially, all that the public schools offer, and all that many American homes offer, is “listen to what the teacher says” or “listen to what your parents say” and you’ll be OK. Maybe there was a time in the past when this was good enough, but it’s not good enough today. The fact that these shooters were “normal children” is true, because these problems with expression are the norm for our society.

In fact, there are schools and there are homes today in which children have learned how to manage their lives and express their feelings and their anger in appropriate and effective ways. Educationally these approaches come under the category of “alternative.” They include alternative schools and home education. In some of these cases there are actual democratic decision-making processes in place, which give children a voice and a way to express themselves and be heard. All children and adults have anger at one time or another. Because alternatively educated children have continuous outlets, anger does not build up to uncontrollable levels.

In the schools and homeschools where this is the case, violence is virtually unheard of. If any of these children/shooters had experienced real empowerment and responsibility in their schools and in their homes, and if they had learned better ways to express their anger and deal with problems (other than by the ubiquitous arcade games, which teach kids to solve problems by shooting down their enemies) these tragedies might have been avoided.

Summerhill Continues to Survive and Thrive
From the London Times, Friday, March 20, 1998

Summerhill School, where reading is optional, was facing closure. Now it is being praised. Josephine Gardiner went to visit:

Staff at Summerhill, the archetype of progressive education in its purest form, are somewhat bemused by the pat on the back they have received out of the blue from Stephen Byers, a minister who is increasingly associated with the traditionalist wing of educational thinking.

This is a school where you are more likely to find yourself involved in philosophical discussions about the nature of freedom than talking about numeracy targets or international competitiveness. The very idea of the urbane, ambitious, and tidy-minded Mr. Byers being associated with this ramshackle outpost of pre-War idealism in the wilds of Suffolk is intriguing.

Last year the 76-year-old independent school’s future began to look fragile after inspectors criticised the fact that pupils were not under any obligation to learn to read and that some were still not reading by the age of nine. This followed a highly uncomplimentary report from the Office for Standards in Education in 1993, which said that standards were too low,

pupils' progress too slow, and the curriculum too narrow. The school was warned that unless it pulled its socks up, a "notice of complaint" would be served and it would face closure.

The only thing that has changed since then, says Zoe Readhead, the head teacher, is that staff have written an action plan which makes aims and objectives more explicit and introduces a new emphasis on documentation. She has no idea why Mr. Byers suddenly decided to congratulate the school and has had no conversations with the Department of Education or inspectors.

Summerhill's uncompromising commitment to children's rights to make their own decisions remains inviolate. Mrs. Readhead, who is the daughter of the school's famous founder, A.S. Neill, has always insisted that she would rather see the school closed than introduce anything that would dilute her father's principles. "We can't say to the children you have freedom of choice, and then give them a list of exceptions or tell them that lessons are voluntary, but they must do English and maths." The only compulsory activity is fire drill.

Children who show no interest in learning are discreetly monitored by the staff, who will try to establish whether the reluctance is a genuine exercise of free will or if there is another cause, such as shyness, fear of failure, or unpleasant past experiences. "What we do not do is start panicking because the child has not reached a certain standard by a certain age and say "this child is failing."

But anyone who thinks Summerhill is a free-for-all would be seriously mistaken. This is anarchy, not chaos: pupils and staff here must all obey over 200 dauntingly complex and detailed rules, covering everything from bullying to what you are allowed to eat for pudding. These rules, known as "laws" are made, remade, abolished or amended every week by the pupils at the school meeting. More than anything else at Summerhill, this meeting is the soul of the school, and watching it is a curiously moving experience.

Attendance at the meeting is good (usually around 75 per cent). About 45 pupils, aged between nine and 16, together with the staff, sat unceremoniously in a circle in the school's battered hall. It lasted an hour and a half, during which there were no disturbances—no shouts, no yawns, no interruptions, no fidgeting or giggling. Even the youngest child showed a formidable and consistent concentration and a respect for the opinions of others that would put most adults to shame.

The subject matter under earnest discussion was, to outside ears, less than elevated: who irritated who during breakfast, should dinner-slops be put in a plastic bucket or carried to the kitchen, should Stephen be fined 20p for annoying Camilla on the phone, can the 12-year-olds stay up an extra 10 minutes on Wednesdays to watch the X-files, should two boys be taken to a "Tribunal" for "f***** about in the kitchen," and do any of these matters need new legislation?

But what seems trivial to adults can be overwhelmingly important to children or adolescents, who tend to have a keen sense of justice. To hear

pupils' "petty" preoccupations treated so seriously and dignified by scrupulously democratic procedures is very strange, which shows perhaps how rarely young people are listened to. There was, however, a slight tendency for boys to speak more often than girls.

"This is a painfully law-abiding community," says Mrs. Readhead. "People are much less likely to rebel against laws they have made themselves."

But *Lord of the Flies* casts a long shadow, and many people find the idea of children making their own rules deeply frightening. What happens if the school throws up a fledgling Hitler or legislative assembly becomes dominated by a revolutionary clique?

Mrs. Readhead, who was educated at Summerhill herself, insists that this has never happened, and that these fears are rooted in a mistaken presumption of Original Sin. "*Lord of the Flies* is more about the destructive effects of the public school system, and what happens when authority is removed. "Summerhill pupils have no experience of authority and are steeped in democracy," she argues, so "if these pupils were stranded on a desert island, they would just call endless meetings. People's fears are based on the idea that children are barely civilised and if control is removed all sorts of horrors will break out. "

Safeguards against bullying are built into the system, with older children acting as "ombudsmen." The fact that the school has only 65 pupils must also make it easier to spot. Ms Readhead also dismisses the argument that adolescents need something to rebel against in order to find their identities. "That's just a way of justifying the fact that teenagers do rebel. We had no teenage tantrums in my family."

Only 18 of the school's 65 pupils are from Britain. The diverse nationalities of the rest show just how far the ideas of A.S. Neill have traveled. But what is particularly noticeable is the preponderance of pupils from the "tiger economies" of the Pacific Rim, especially Japan and Taiwan. This is ironic given the enthusiasm with which British politicians and education gurus have praised the traditional teaching methods in countries such as Taiwan.

Aesthetically, they may have been disappointed. It cannot be denied that Summerhill is decidedly tatty, especially for an independent school. Despite being housed in a rambling Edwardian house, it has the impermanent feel of a gypsy camp or a squat. Rooms and corridors are bare and scuffed; the inspectors even called it "squalid." But this is how the pupils want it. "This is a children's environment and children like to romp about. If they want pictures, they can put them up," says Mrs. Readhead. "I don't see it as my job to impose my taste on the school."

Summerhill costs £6,000 a year and rarely has more than 75 pupils. Would it matter much if it closed?

"If you get rid of Summerhill, you lose 76 years of children's culture," Mrs. Redhead says. While only a few children come here, she argues, there's a lot to be learnt about how children choose to do things,

which teachers in state schools might find interesting. "It's also a question of parental choice. I would never dream of sending one of my children to a Catholic school, but I respect Tony Blair's right to do so. So why can't parents have the freedom to send their children here?"

Editor's note: Summerhill needs more American students. They must be aged 13 or younger. One of the American students who visited Summerhill with the AERO trip last summer is now a Summerhill student, and his family is quite pleased with how it is going. For more information contact the AERO office or e-mail Zoe directly at Zoe_Readhead@compuserve.com.

Interview with Pat Montgomery on the Education Revolution Radio Show,
2/8/98

JERRY: Our guest today is Pat Montgomery who is the founder of the Clonlara Homebased Education Program. This has been a very interesting week for us because I was on National Public Radio on Talk of the Nation a few days ago and the phone has just been ringing off the hook since then. It's just been fantastic. So many people are interested in educational alternatives, homeschooling, alternative schools, charter schools, you name it. They want to see a change in education. I guess that's why we call this show the Education Revolution.

JERRY: Pat, you have founded not only Clonlara Homebased Education Program, but Clonlara School before that. When did you first start Clonlara?

PAT: Well, in 1967, thirty years ago. We've been at it a long time here. I had actually been a teacher in the public and parochial schools prior to that time. When I had my own children, literally I made the decision not to abandon them to the systems that I knew very, very well, having grown up with them and having been engaged with them as teacher. That's why I started Clonlara School.

JERRY: In a way, you really started it to teach your own kids. So homeschooling was part of the agenda even in the beginning, in a sense.

PAT: Yes. We didn't know those words at that time. It was 1967 and it was not a re-popularized thing. Prior to institutional schooling of any kind, of course, there was homeschooling. But we had fallen hook, line, and sinker for institutions in those days, so we were brainwashed and the institutions were the way to go. When Jim and I decided what we were going to do with all our children, we knew we weren't going to send them to the public schools or the parochial schools that we knew so well. What were we going to do? It never occurred to us to keep them home; our minds were not in that frame at all.

JERRY: So the closest thing you could do was start your own school.

PAT: Start our own school. We started with eight students. One of them was mine and the second of mine came along a year later. Each year it grew a little bit more and we were at the business of doing private alternative school for almost a dozen years. In 1979 we had our first request from people who did hear about homeschooling—before I did.

They said, “Will you please help us? We are not going to send our children to any school and we need some assistance. We would feel better if we had some guides.” I said, “Of course. Yes.” If I had the freedom to start my own school, why shouldn’t you have the freedom to start your own school with your own child? So based upon that I said fine. At first there were only two families so it was just a little homework for me and for them to get together by phone, because they lived at quite a distance, and converse periodically. Well, it wasn’t long after that the word just got out. People said, “I understand you’re helping homeschoolers.” I’d think, “Who told you?” So it was, months didn’t go by until I realized that there are going to be more and more asking and we better get this a little bit more trim and not just talking to somebody incidentally sometimes on the phone, but a little bit more regularized.

JERRY: Did you worry about the legal aspects of it?

PAT: Well eventually I did take what we were going to do up to the Department of Education in Michigan because I had already heard some tremors from there saying, “We understand you have some students associated with your school who live 200, 400 miles away?”

JERRY: Ha! Long commute!

PAT: So there were questions. I took what we were doing up, and one of the people behind the desk at the Department of Education said, “You know, you can’t do this.” I said, “It’s too late, I already have.” That began ... I would say a dialogue, but that would be much too nice a word, a bit of tension.

JERRY: A bitter conflict.

PAT: Yes, tension enough so that many years later when the Department in Lansing was not helping homeschooling at all, in fact, it was hindering, we took them to court. So that tension started in 1979.

JERRY: Wow. Right off the bat.

PAT: Right off the bat, when I took what I was doing up to them. I knew

better than to just sit still and wait because that would put the power in their hands to come looking. I wanted them to know, here it is, all laid out for you. I'm doing this; Clonlara's doing this. Now put that in your pipe and smoke it, as it were.

JERRY: Now to skip fast forward, how many students do you now have enrolled in Clonlara Homebased Education Program?

PAT: The count is between 2,700 and 3,000 families. And students worldwide, the count is around 7,500.

JERRY: 7,500! You say worldwide—what other countries?

PAT: 25 other countries besides each of the United States.

JERRY: And you know I recently got e-mail from somebody in China and I referred them to you. So this is actually possible. Do you have to know the laws in every one of these countries?

PAT: We do.

JERRY: And have you had any problems with that?

PAT: Actually, there is one country in the entire world where people are given grief about homeschooling. Now, here's your trivia question, Jerry, what country is it?

JERRY: We can see if anyone can guess calling in. But I'll take my guess. Don't tell me whether I'm right or not. I was going to say Germany is one of them. I know there are others.

PAT: Well, I know of only one where people are actually given serious grief and told as much as, "You can't do that."

JERRY: Really. Well, there are certain countries, of course, where homeschooling is not legal. But usually if they're not a national of that country, people don't bother them if they're doing essentially what you would call a correspondence program. I know that in Japan there are problems and you have about 50 students or so in Japan, is that right?

PAT: We have about 183 now.

JERRY: Oh my goodness! Is Japan the country?

PAT: No.

JERRY: It's not, so people can still guess what it is. I know, though, in Japan, homeschooling is not legal.

PAT: Well, it is not, and it is. Because the Central Minister of Education for many years just turned the other way and wouldn't even acknowledge, number one, that there was a problem with what they call school "refusers" there. Children of all ages who refuse to go to school.

JERRY: There was just a big article that came out in the paper—that was another e-mail thing that happened—and I referred the people in Japan to a person there who actually was homeschooling.

JERRY: Tonight we have a call from Mary in Manhasset, New York. How are you doing, Mary?

MARY: Hey, Jerry, how are you doing?

JERRY: OK. Well, do you have a question for Pat?

MARY: Yes, Pat Montgomery, what a great opportunity to talk with you.

PAT: Thank you, Mary.

MARY: I have three children that I'm homeschooling. My children are very young; they're actually three, five, and seven. We started with some early education. I started teaching them to read when they were born, as sort of an experiment, you know, to play. You know, the Doman stuff?

PAT: I do know the Doman.

MARY: I expected to try it, find out it didn't work, and say, "ok, that didn't work." But it did work, which was a surprise. I never intended to homeschool, but I ended up homeschooling because everybody said that since they could read at three, they would be bored in first grade. I was aghast that they would want us to slow our children down to keep up with the schools. So I said, "If that's the case, then I'll homeschool," not really knowing what I was saying. But we are doing it, and it's wonderful. The question is what kind of things does Clonlara have for early education? And what do you think about that?

PAT: Well, what do I think about what you've done? I think you are an excited mother. I think you really fell in love with having babies, nurturing them, and being with them. And you enjoy that to no end. And you're willing to try different things, new things. It sounds to me, I may be off the mark here because I'm only hearing your voice, but I'm hearing your enthusiasm as well. It seems to me that you didn't start Doman

because you were pressured to have them perform. That wasn't where you were coming from. Am I wrong?

MARY: No, you're absolutely—I'm amazed that's how you pegged me, and I've never talked to you before.

PAT: This is true. It seems to me that you are in love with their lives, with your own life. And for people like you, it's such a natural thing to keep on going. Many people would put you in a category of what's becoming more and more known as "unschoolers."

MARY: Yes, I've noticed that.

PAT: You've done the natural thing. The way, it sounds to me, that you have done it has flowed with the nature of your nurturing. For you, it would be almost like a sin to send your children to an institution.

MARY: That's how I feel. Now I'm a single parent and I'm still homeschooling.

PAT: There are many, many thousands like you across the country.

MARY: Oh, we need to network, I need to meet them.

PAT: The National Single Parent Homeschoolers Group.

MARY: Yes. Is there one?

PAT: Yes.

MARY: I'll have Jerry hook me up with them later.

PAT: Absolutely. Now, part of your question was, what does Clonlara offer people like you? Let's put the phrase "like you" aside for a moment. What do we offer people? Well, certainly support and certainly guidance. A lot of people feel like, "Hmm, I wonder what does go on over there in school? I haven't been there since I was a wee one and I don't remember and there must have been changes." Well, we can guide them along that. We can say, here's what someone would be doing if he were in that first grade or seventh grade over there. Now, what you're doing, however, if you want it for comparison's sake—and I'm talking about this hypothetical person now—or if you want it for grandma's sake or for a spouse's sake—because sometimes a spouse comes home and says, "You call this school?" So people need some reassurance, they need some guidance, they need a shoulder to cry on, some support to lean on. And we certainly provide all of that. Now, I put the words "like you" over there on the shelf a minute ago. I think you just

ought to come here and get a job helping other people homeschool, Mary.

MARY: Oh! Wow! Where are you?

PAT: Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MARY: Well, I'll definitely come visit!

JERRY: We have Lainie in upstate New York. Lainie, how are you doing?

LAINIE: Ok, Jerry, how are you?

JERRY: All right. Do you have a question for Pat?

LAINIE: I was recently at Clonlara and kind of missed you. Both my children are in her program and my son's in CompuHigh, which I hear you're going to be talking about soon.

PAT: Well, maybe you can stay on and help me out with that.

LAINIE: My son, Anthony, is on the phone too.

JERRY: Anthony's a CompuHigh student.

PAT: Some years back, I was approached by three public school teachers from West Virginia who had the idea of having an online school. They talked with me and I was very excited about it and said, "Let's try that with our homeschool students." We did, and the rest is history and, Anthony, how does it work?

ANTHONY: CompuHigh is on the Web, not the Internet, just part of the Internet. It's really cool because we have mentors, not teachers. Our mentors in CompuHigh steer us in the right direction and check up on us every once in a while to make sure we're going the right way. Right now I'm in English writing. It used to be "collaborative writing," but it took so long to write collaboratively over the Internet that it didn't work. I'm also in "computer networking." We take part in projects over the Internet. One I was recently doing was called "longitude and latitude," where we measured the shadows once a week for a whole year. We learned how the earth orbited the sun and how the shadows could measure it, and tell exactly where we were and what season.

JERRY: Anthony, do you sometimes do a chat mode at all?

ANTHONY: We do sometimes, but it's weird because we all keep really weird hours. I'm usually up at about five and a lot of the people at CompuHigh

are up at four.

JERRY: AM or PM?

ANTHONY: AM. They're up at 4 AM. And I get up at five.

JERRY: You mean because of where they live?

ANTHONY: No, just because kids like to stay up late.

JERRY: Wow.

ANTHONY: It's really nice because it let's everybody keep their own hours so if they have something they want to do, or if they have a job, or they're working with their local astronomer or something, they can log in when it's convenient for them.

JERRY: Anthony, how old are you?

ANTHONY: I'm sixteen now.

JERRY: And how long have you been homeschooling?

ANTHONY: Oh no. That's a good question. Mom?

LAINIE: Nine years. The first four we worked with our local public school and the last five we've been with Clonlara.

JERRY: Pat, how many students are enrolled in CompuHigh?

PAT: I think it's around 200 now. That's a program that we offer to the high-school age students, anybody from 13 years up. Anthony brought out all the benefits of it: you can do it at your own pace, you can do it at three in the morning, at eight in the morning. That doesn't matter. It's the student's best time that is the primary thing, and that certainly differs from going to school, doesn't it?

LAINIE: I think that one of the other things that's really great about CompuHigh is that you'll have kids in "American history," or "English writing," that span ages from 13 all the way up to 18. It's interest-based learning. If they're interested in it, they're taking it, no matter what age they are. So they're all learning from each other at the same time.

PAT: So it is collaborative in that sense.

LAINIE: Oh sure. And then when they go into the chat lounge, they talk

about what they're doing. I also have a 13-year-old who's in 8th grade and taking the "English writing." She's been known to write ongoing poems with this other girl. They just keep writing the poem back and forth.

JERRY: They don't have to be in high school to be in CompuHigh then?

PAT: Age 13 is when we encourage them to start. Age 13 is usually around what somebody else would call, what, 8th grade?

JERRY: What if somebody really younger wanted to do it?

PAT: We don't have any ages really. We've had some people who have asked, and it's a situation of youngers being with olders. And there are big differences between 12 and 14, interest-wise, savvy-wise, content-wise, but it can be done.

JERRY: Has there ever been any thought about using the visual component on the Internet? Like people being able to see each other with a camera, or something like that?

PAT: You better talk to someone who knows about that.

ANTHONY: Actually, there has been a topic that's come up in the last couple of years. The only problem right now is the connections, and because of the computers, it's not really feasible in the near future.

LAINIE: Didn't you guys all have your photos on the Web at one point?

ANTHONY: That's what we do. We're starting it at CompuHigh now where we all have our own little bios and we scan them in with our pictures.

JERRY: Pat, what about getting into college? Is that a problem if you're homeschooling?

PAT: I was asked that question this week by the father of a student who happens to be in 8th or 9th grade now, but he's looking forward. So that sent me to do my homework. Somewhere along the lines of a low 74% of our graduating students from homeschool programs go on to college, a high of 92% of any given class has been our charting. This excludes one group of people who for religious reasons are very committed to homeschooling but not at all committed to having their children go to college. They are more inclined to have them have real-life skills, preferably manual, clerical, skills. So the percentage is really high. The father then asked me, "But do they go to the college of their choice?" I asked the Dean of our secondary school that question and she said that since 1979 she has yet to hear of a student that didn't go in to the college of his or her choice.

Now that is absolutely amazing!

JERRY: Students who go to Clonlara graduate with a regular diploma. They don't have to take a GED test, right?

PAT: Not at all. They have a private high school diploma. They have the exact same diploma as the kids who attend our campus school everyday from September to June get.

JERRY: Anthony, have you been thinking about college at all?

ANTHONY: I don't know, but my sister got into the college of her choice. Last year she started at Hillsdale, Michigan.

LAINIE: And she made the Dean's List, guys!

JERRY: Wow. Did she go to Clonlara before that?

PAT: Yes, she's one of our graduates.

JERRY: She didn't have any trouble getting into Hillsdale, then?

LAINIE: No, not at all. In fact, she was accepted at NYU and Boston University and Elmira College, and she chose Hillsdale.

JERRY: Well, there's one case anyway, huh Pat?

PAT: Yes, brought to you live. You don't have to take my word for it.

JERRY: Do you expect that the CompuHigh program will grow very much as it adds capacity?

PAT: It can grow much, much larger because when it does Bob Parner and Stan Kantner and Connie Parner enlist people to do additional classes and become mentors in the program. It started out with a pilot program four years ago with the idea that maybe we'd get 40 or 50 students. Well, we got over 100. From then it has grown to past the 200 that it is now, so it's a steadily growing program.

JERRY: Is there a way they can contact you directly, Pat?

PAT: Yes, they can call 313-769-4511.

JERRY: I have a question for you, Pat: Which is better, going to an alternative school or home school?

PAT: And, also, Jerry, we can't forget the trivia before we go off the air, you know.

JERRY: Oh, right! What is the one country that has made it most difficult for homeschoolers? Mary, are you still there?

MARY: I know what it is, Jerry. I think it's the United States.

JERRY: Ok, and Lainie?

LAINIE: Let Anthony. He's dying...

ANTHONY: Is it Austria?

JERRY: Austria! And Lainie, what do you think?

LAINIE: Nope, that was my guess.

JERRY: Ok, I think it's Germany. Ok, what is it, Pat?

PAT: Germany. That is not to say that there are not many homeschoolers in Germany and that we don't have some who are enrolled in our program who are actually native to the country, incidentally. Which is the case with most of our 25 countries: those folks are native to those countries, not Americans abroad. But Germany is the one; it's kind of picky about learning the language at certain levels and taking the Gymnasium, and so on. But now your question, which is a good question: Why go to Clonlara campus day school when you could homeschool, or vice versa?

JERRY: Especially, say, if you lived in Ann Arbor, what would you recommend to somebody?

PAT: Well, it all depends on the needs of the student. There are students who come here every day who wouldn't dream of homeschooling. They want to be in the group daily. They want "education" of dynamic group process, democratic decision-making, interacting with kids of all ages, adults of all ages in a school community. There are others who say that's all very nice, but right now, those needs do not match ours, and we have a community. It's called the homeschool support group or community and that's enough for us. We do everything you just said and so on. So it really, truly depends on the needs of the student and the parent and the situation in the home. It always should be that way; we always should have, as citizens of this country especially, the option, the choices that we can make.

JERRY: Believe it or not, our time has run out. I told you the hour was

going to go too fast, and it did. I'm so delighted to have you on, and we're going to have to have you on again because there's so much more to talk about.

PAT: I agree.

Conferences

June 22, Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ. Unschoolers Network Conference & Curriculum Fair. Nancy Plent, Unschoolers Network, 2 Smith St, Farmingdale, NJ 07727. Tel: 732 938-2473

June 25-27, Orange, California. 1998 International Alternative Education Conference. Chapman University, Sponsored by LEARN and the Orange County Department of Education, Yvette Rosevear, International Alternative Education Conference Information, 16490 Harbor Blvd., Suite B, Fountain Valley, CA 92704. Tel: 916 322-5012. E-mail: susan_condrey@code.k12.ca.us

June 29-July 10, Woolman Hill Conference Center, Deerfield, MA, A People's Institute for Education and Action, Folk Education Association of America, 107 Vernon St, Northampton, MA 01060, 413 585-8755, cspicer@k12s.phast.umass.edu

July 8-15, Vinnitsa, Ukraine, International Democratic Education Conference, Oleg Belin, Stork Family School, 011 380 432 4 65577, or contact the AERO office

July 10-12, Boxborough, MA. Homeschool and Family Learning Conference. PO Box 1056, Gray, ME 04039. Tel: 207 657-2800.

July 19-21, 1998, Chicago, IL. Future Quest: Strategies for the New Millennium, World Future Society, 7910 Woodmont Ave, Suite 450, Bethesda, MD 20814. Tel: 800-989-8274.

July 25-August 1, Ashfield, MA, The Live-Out, sponsored by Albany's Free School, parents, teachers, children, living, learning together (rumor has it that John Gatto will be there), Mary Leue, 72 Philip St, Albany, NY 12202, 518 432-1578, MarySKOLE@aol.com

July 30-August 1, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, Edventures '98, Association of Educators in Private Practice, Chris Yelich, N7425 Switzke Rd, Watertown, WI 53094, 800 252-3280, Yelichris@aol.com

July 30-August 2, 1998, Washington, DC. National Coalition of Education Activists Conference. PO Box 679, Rhinebeck, NY 12572.

August 7-8, Burlington, VT. Shaker Mountain School 30 Year Reunion.
Contact: Madelin Colbert, 25 Greenwood Dr, Colchester, VT 05448. Tel: 802
860 4889.

August 7-8, Livonia, MI. Homeschool and Family Learning Conference. PO
Box 1056, Gray, ME 04039. Tel: 207 657-2800.

August 15, Colorado. "Homeschooling For Everyone" 1998 Colorado
Conference. Contact: Teikyo Loretto, Heights University, 3001 S. Federal,
Denver, CO. Sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Education Connection. E-mail:
connect@pcisys.net. Online: <http://www.pcisys.net/~dstanley/>

August 21-23, Camden Snowbowl, ME, The Community School's Reunion to
Celebrate their 25th Year, PO Box 555, Camden, ME 04843, 207 236-3000

September 4-6, Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, VA, 6th Annual Twin Oaks
Community Conference, 138 Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa, VA 23093, 540 894-5126,
gathering@ic.org

September 11-13, Home Educators' Resource Organization of Oklahoma is
holding their fourth annual Fall Family Retreat and Conference , at Robbers
Cave State Park in Wilburton, OK. For more information, contact Julie
Miller, Rt 1 Box 40C, Cleo Springs, OK 73729 , HERO of OK,
mjmillier@pldi.net

September 26, Oxford, England, Human Scale Education, Annual Conference,
Fiona Carnie, 96 Carlingcott, Near Bath, England BA2 8AW, 011 44 1 879
230443

October 18-21, Detroit, MI. National Dropout Prevention Network
Conference, "wheels in Motion: Creating Champions of Learning." Online:
www.dropoutprevention.org

October 25-6, Vichy, France. Annual Meeting of Les Enfants d'abord.
Brigitte Guimbal, 474 Chemin de Font Cuberte, 06560 Valborne, France. E-
mail: bguimbal@aol.com. Tel: 04 93 12 93.49

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*My Life As a Traveling Homeschooler, by Jenifer Goldman, The Solomon Press. An 11-year-old describes her adventures visiting homeschoolers and helping her uncle, Jerry Mintz, start new alternative schools around the US and Canada. Kids everywhere are reading this book and deciding to write their own books! NOW ONLY \$6.50 for AERO-GRAMME subscribers

*GREEN REVOLUTION, the newsletter of the School of Living. AERO-GRAMME readers can become members of the School of Living and get a subscription to the Green Revolution for half price. The SOL is a 60-year-old organization that pioneered the environmental protection movement, consumer protection, and is involved with land trust and communities movements, and is the sponsor of AERO. \$10

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AUDIOCASSETTES:

New! The tapes from our new show, The Education Revolution on the TalkAmerica Network are now available. The shows we have on tape now are: #2: Homeschoolers Leni and Anthony Santoro. She talks about a lending

library of educational games and toys she has developed.

- #3: Live from Youth Summit in MA, Chris Kawicki, a Hampshire College graduate starting a new school in VT, and with a Berea College student.
 - #4: Live from NCACS conference in Chicago. Interviews with Marvin Garcia about Pedro Albizu Campos School, and with a teacher at Clonlara School.
 - #5: Steve Boncheck of Harmony School in Indiana.
 - #6: John Potter, founder of the New School of Northern VA.
 - # 7: Mary Leue, founder of the Free School in Albany.
 - #8: Andy Smallman, founder of Puget Sound Community School, Seattle.
 - #9: Interview with Professor Margit Watts, expert on educational uses of Internet.
 - #10: Mary Adams and Andy Shaffer, who raised their children using Doman concepts.
 - #11: Joanna Camp, about remineralizing the earth, and Ron Miller, editor of Great Ideas in Education.
 - #12: Joe Weber of Contra Costa Alternative School.
 - #13 Les Garber of Horizons School, Atlanta.
 - #14: Elaine Young, about the NYS Charter bill.
 - #15: David Colfax, CA homeschooler.
 - #16: Mike Denisenko, Graduate of School Within a School, Brookline, MA.
- Call AERO about more recent taped interviews, including Morty Lefcoe, Pat Montgomery, Robert Theobald, Robert Ferris, Arthur Morgan School, Renaissance School, Goddard College, 10 Signs, Pat Seery, DariaBrezinsky, Schuelerschule, Albany's Free School, etc. \$5 each

VIDEOS

(Note: We have been cataloging AERO's extensive video library of educational alternatives and conferences, with over 150 done so far. Let us know if you would like a list of the ones done to date.)

*FRENCH-AMERICAN ALTERNATIVE CAMP at Theleme School in the French Pyrenees, including Cathar Castles, Spain, Dali Museum, 22 minutes. \$15

*Two-hour video of the DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS CONFERENCE at HADERA SCHOOL in Israel, April 1996. Includes tour of Hadera School. \$25

*Seven-Country trip to Europe and Russia, Including European Forum for Freedom in Education Conference, Democratic Schools Conference in Vienna, Eureka Avant Garde, in Ijevsk, Russia, School of Self-Determination, Moscow International Film School, Brockwood Park Krishnamurti School, Herman Jordan Montessori School, Theleme School. \$20

CONTACT AERO FOR VIDEOS OF OUR OTHER RUSSIAN TRIPS

*SUMMERHILL VIDEO. Two videos in one: the 1990 International Alternative School Conference at Summerhill, with interviews of Summerhill students and

alumni as well as vivid footage of the Summerhill end-of-term celebration. Also, Summerhill's 70th anniversary celebration in August, 1991, featuring more alumni interviews, and a Summerhill democratic meeting. We also have a 1995 tape of Sands School and Summerhill. \$25 each

*Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement. A fascinating two-hour interview with a 96-year-old pioneer in the alternative education movement. Born in the Ukraine of Jewish, anarchist parents in 1893, she started anarchist schools in England back in 1908, went to the US in 1917 to teach at the Modern School (based on the work of Francisco Ferrer) in New Jersey, and taught at and ran Modern Schools until 1958. Her son Jim, who was a student at the Modern Schools and is now a 70-year-old pediatrician, is also interviewed. There are also excerpts from the Modern School reunion in 1989 which featured the Spanish Modern Schools. \$25

*Transcript of Nellie Dick and the Modern School! \$5
CONTACT AERO FOR FOUR OTHER MODERN SCHOOL VIDEOS

*DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS. A two-hour tape of demonstrations of various democratic meetings, including one at Summerhill, a meeting of Russian students at the New Schools Festival in the Crimea (translated into English), a demonstration meeting with Long Island homeschoolers, age four to 13, a meeting setting up a democratic system for an "at-risk" public high school alternative, and a democratic meeting at a public "choice" high school. \$25

*CODE CRASH--For quickly learning the Morse Code. Hundreds sold! This is a tape in which two 12-year-old homeschoolers learn the Morse code in less than 20 minutes each by our unique copyrighted association method. People interested in getting their amateur radio license will be amazed. It works. We guarantee it. You'll learn it. Show to a whole class. Recently glowingly reviewed in Growing Without Schooling; "We were all amazed and impressed with ourselves that we suddenly knew the whole Morse code in an hour." \$20

*HOMESCHOOL RESOURCE CENTERS. A video of a homeschool resource center featuring the Snakefoot Education Center, at Common Ground Community. This is a group of families that created a center in which 15 homeschooled children meet three times a week. They also hired a resource person. \$20

*Two WPIX TV shows about Homeschooling and Alternative Education. In the first, Jerry Mintz introduces alternatives in the tri-state area, with on-site visitation of the Long Island Homeschoolers, and Manhattan Country School. In the second, a WPIX interviewer in the studio grills Jerry and two homeschoolers. One parent started homeschooling because her son had cancer, and the schools refused to teach him. She homeschooled, and when he

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