

AERO-GRAMME #3

The Alternative Education Resource Organization Newsletter

417 Roslyn Rd., Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

516 621-2195

April, 1990

This is the fifth newsletter that I have put out since September, and the third AERO-GRAMME. It was born of a need for interaction with people I had met all around the United States and in other countries, not long after I had resigned as Executive Director and National Coordinator of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. Specifically, I needed help from people to match the grant from the Bay Foundation for the Kee Way Win Project, to help the tribe start a school on their ancestral land where there had been no school before.

You, my friends, came through. The grant was matched, through cash donations, material and supplies. I went to Kee Way Way, and they have started a school. I hope to go again.

I left the NCACS for a combination of political and personal reasons, yet I am still a member, and continue to help the people that I trained at their national office in Tennessee. I went to the Eastern Regional Caucus at the Free School in Albany, and I plan to go to the national conference near Washington this week. The NCACS still has some serious internal problems to wrestle with, and I will help to the extent that it seems mutually useful. But I think it is good that I now do the work that I am doing independently.

So what is AERO-GRAMME? Everyone on the mailing list is a person or group that I know personally, at least through mail or phone, with those I have met on the Prodigy Network falling between the two. Most are from alternative schools or home schoolers that I have visited. The responses that I have received have been very encouraging, as you can see from the mail and communication sections of the three AERO-GRAMMES. In fact, many people have said they found that section most valuable, to see what a cross section of people are doing at a glance. I have had contributions and communications from over 125 people and organizations (out of 400 mailed out last issue).

I'd like to think that what I share with you all is the need to help children everywhere experience the joy of learning and the kind of empowerment and freedom with responsibility that is everybody's right.

In some ways I think I agree with Ted Sizer of the Coalition of Essential Schools who said at the Minnesota Changing Schools Conference that he "hoped to do away with all alternative schools!" After the crowd of

alternative educators had gasped, he continued: "I think ALL children have the right to be empowered, treated with respect, and experience the things that you provide. It shouldn't just be 'alternative'."

I will also go to the National Alternative School Conference at Stanford University in June. This is an organization consisting mostly of public alternative schools. One of my goals is get some significant interaction and communication between public and private alternative schools, and home educators and their organizations. In fact, in early June I will be attending a small planning conference in Illinois which hopes to unite all alternative educators, or at least get them talking to each other.

As you may have noticed, there has been no price or subscription rate for AERO-GRAMME up to this point. Part of the reason was that I wasn't sure that I wanted to commit myself to doing them if there wasn't enough interest or support. Well, I'm ready to commit myself for at least a year, so I'd like to ask any of you who haven't done so yet to help financially. The suggested donation is now \$15 to cover newsletter production costs, with an additional donation to cover other AERO projects. We still have no regular financial support. As you will read later, we financed the Southeast trip by selling temporary tattoos to tourists at Mardi Gras in New Orleans (we made \$750 in four days--and with people's hospitality, that covered the three week trip!). Checks for the newsletter can be made out to me. Tax deductible contributions can be made out to Shaker Mountain School.

Jerry Mintz-Editor

A NEW SCHOOL IN MISSOULA, MONTANA

Those of you who read the first AERO-GRAMME may remember two items in the "Mail and Communications" section: First was letter from Liz Rantz who had moved to Missoula in order to enroll her children in Sussex School, only to discover that they had a long waiting list. Second was a phone call that came through from Bente Winston, director of Sussex School. Both were offering to host the Autre Chose group from France.

Bente said that they did, indeed, have a long waiting list (now 325!) for their 70 student school. She said she was thinking of helping the parents on the waiting list organize a new school. So I put her in touch with Liz Rantz.

Since that time there has been much discussion and several meetings, which has now led to my contracting to go to Missoula for a week to help the new group organize into a school. I will leave New York on April 30th. Several events are planned, including a day at Sussex, meetings with home

schoolers, the people on the waiting list, and a presentation for the general public. While I am there I also hope to meet with Jerry and Lisa Nichols, former staff members of my school in Vermont.

Incidentally, I was asked if I was interested in directing the new school. Such offers often tempt me, but I know that if I did start directing a school again that I would never be able to continue networking and development work, and no one else that I know of is doing the same thing right now. So I did agree to look for a director and staff members. Other schools often ask me for staff suggestions. If anyone out there is interested, contact me in New York. Also, if your group is interested in establishing a new school or restructuring your school or program, that is something with which I may be able to help.

SOUTHEAST TRIP, FEBRUARY, 1990

My most recent travels have brought me to a dozen alternative schools and home school families in the southeast, some of whom joined me at various points in my travels. The schools included Blue Mountain School, Community School, the New School of Northern Virginia, and "Snake Foot", at Common Ground Community, all in Virginia; New Orleans Free School, in New Orleans; Grassroots Free School, Stone Soup School, in Florida. I also communicated with Jordan Glen, in Florida, and the Highland School, in West Virginia. The home school families included the Goldman's, the Shankins, the Chantals, the Pickfords, and the Leasures, all of Virginia. We financed most of the trip by selling temporary tattoos to the Mardi Gras crowd in New Orleans (let me know if you want information about this good school fund-raiser).

My first stop was over-night at the Laura and Jubal Stuki's house, just south of Washington. They are on the board of the School of Living. The School of Living Annual Conference will be April 28th at Common Ground Community, in Lexington, Virginia. I've been asked to be on their board, but prefer to continue as a consultant, and feel that as a board member there would be a conflict. For more SOL information: Ginny Greene, RD 1 Box 185 A, Cochranville, PA 19330.

HIGHLIGHTS:

While in New Orleans, we stayed at Bob Ferris' house, now Dr. Robert Ferris. New Orleans Free School, which Bob founded, is one of the very few privately founded free schools that became a public school, and perhaps the only public school called "Free School". We did a presentation in three classes about the Kee Way Win trip, and other alternative schools around the country.

We took in \$750 in four days selling the "temporary tattoos", which come in a kit made by a company in New York, and are FDA approved. They are applied by a transfer, and hand painted with an alcohol based paint. They do not come off with water, but come right off with rubbing alcohol. The only danger is that they could scare the wits out of parents, because they look real!

We stopped at Grassroots Free School in Tallahassee, Florida on the way back. Grassroots is a democratic school with non-compulsory class attendance. Its founder, Pat Seery, spent a year at Summerhill before starting Grassroots. We did a class at Grassroots, and videotaped some other classes there, as well as an interview with Pat, excerpts of which follow this article. They have established a community surrounding their school, selling one acre plots on which people have built houses. Seery has also helped establish other schools in the area, including the public alternative high school, S.A.I.L. A large group has been raising money to go to the NCACS conference in April, but Pat doesn't plan to go.

We also visited Stone Soup, an alternative boarding school which is around 20 years old. The current director, Tim, was a student at Stone Soup for 8 years. They are also democratic and non-coercive, a policy which they recently returned to. To our surprise we discovered that their new intern, Natalie Wickers, from Friends World College is there as a result of a visit I made to the college, at the request of Dara Backler, who was looking for an alternative school in which to intern. She graduated from Harmony School, in Bloomington, IN. Dara, who is now interning at the Free School in Albany, passed along my other suggestions to her friend, who is now happily interning at Stone Soup! We are still pursuing the idea of creating a training program for people wanting to teach in alternative schools, either at Friends World College, other colleges, or independently.

Another alternative school, which we have visited (we cannot name it), has three siblings of River Phoenix attending. The Phoenix family home schooled their children until they found this school, a couple of years ago. One of the students is Leaf Phoenix, who starred with Steve Martin in "Parenthood".

In Virginia, we did presentations at Blue Mountain School, in Floyd, and Community School, near Roanoke. Coincidentally, Tina Dawson, the director of Community, had sent a contribution to us while we were on the road. They have about 120 students, including their pre-school program. The older students (up to 8th grade), do interning, and work with the younger students as part of their program.

We did not get to visit them, but we heard that North Branch School has received a grant to build a new school building in Afton, VA. We heard that

it was about \$200,000!

We stopped at Common Ground Community, which is on land held in a land trust by the School of Living. They are about to buy 30 more acres. There is a little building at Common Ground that was being used for meetings of home schoolers when I visited last year. I suggested that they expand the use, and they have done just that. They now meet three times a week, with over 20 home schoolers involved, and a resource person working with the parents. The children really like the program, and have named it "Snakefoot" (to the dismay of some parents, I heard). It now stands as a good example of home schoolers organizing themselves.

As we approached Washington, we got to see John Potter's New School of Northern Virginia. They now have twenty students and growing, having started with five. It is in the suburban town of Vienna. School was over by the time I got there, but a student intern showed me around the attractive facility.

The excerpt of the videotaped interview with Pat Seery follows. He is the Director of Grassroots Free School, in Tallahassee, Florida.

PAT SEERY INTERVIEW

JERRY: How are the day to day decisions made here?

PAT: We have once a week meetings "pow wows". At Summerhill they called them "general meetings". Then people can call emergency pow wows if they feel that there's a conflict that's not stopping.

JERRY: The vote of those meetings is the decision?

PAT: Democracy! Yeah, it's the old "taking kids early and sticking them right in with the ups and downs of participatory democracy". Our once a month family meetings are the extension of that concept taken to the parents and child. That's larger, corporate stuff.

JERRY: Do the kids here have to go to classes?

PAT: Naw. No, Jerry! Non-compulsary classes. It's that Summerhill--bless old Neill--we've really been influenced by that accumulated wisdom from across the seas. We're holding fast to non-compulsary classes, self regulation on the individual level and self government on the community level.

(At this point we are intercepted by Pat's four year old son, Geo, who is handing him some receipts. Pat responds to him in Spanish, thanks him and

tells him where to put the receipts. He speaks to his children in Spanish so they will grow up being fluent in a second language)

JERRY: What would you say to people who were worried that with non-compulsary classes that kids wouldn't learn enough?

PAT: After years here my responses are probably a little bit more sophisticated. I would say that they are not fluent enough, they don't know enough about brain research. That would be one of my responses. One of the premises that the school operates on is that the mind is naturally inquisitive. You don't need to teach the mind how to learn--it comes in the body knowing how to do that. This is kind of strange, but our first obligation, in a certain sense is a negative one: Don't destroy what is already there. Don't stop the natural inquisitiveness of the mind to learn.

People will come out here and say, "Well, you've got something going here. I don't see a lot of classes or heavy academics."

Usually what I say to them is, "Do you see active minds?"

And they say, "Oh yeah, you've got that. These kids are really going and they really talk to you!"

And I say, "Don't we have a contradiction there? If the mind is active, it's got to be learning! How can the mind be active and not be learning? That's its function in the body."

With that recent surge in brain research in the last thirty years, it really corroborates that. In brain research terms, the brain is "aggressive". So when you hear that kind of a challenge, when you hear, "They won't learn," you need to decipher what people are really getting at when they go at that angle of criticism. They're afraid that they might not learn in the same sequence the "subject matter" that everybody else in the country is "supposed" to learn. Well, we think that's a bunch of hogwash, that everybody should know exactly the same things. We don't care that everyone learns the capital of Venezuela at the same time.

John Holt said that "There are a thousand ways into the universe", and what we're interesting in fostering here is the thousand ways into the universe, and not just the one way. That's my "Pat" response!

AN AMAZING TALE ABOUT THE MODERN SCHOOL AND TWO VIDEOS

As you know from previous AERO-GRAMMES, I am working on a video of the Modern School movement, featuring Nellie Dick, a pioneer in that movement, who will be 97 this year. In the process of working on the Modern School/ Nellie Dick video, a remarkable connection has emerged.

I needed to get some photographs from the Modern School era from Jim Dick, Nellie's son. He went to the Modern School in Stelton, New Jersey, when he was a child. Some people may remember the story that I wrote in the NCACS newsletter: The Modern Schools did not force students to go to classes, and

Jim wasn't interested in learning how to read until he was more than ten years old. He then asked his mother to buy him a particular book that he wanted. "Why should I buy you that book? You don't know how to read.," Nellie responded. "Then I'll learn how to read THAT BOOK!" Jim said. So he learned how to read THAT BOOK (which he still remembers was called "Smokey"), and thereupon learned how to read. Three months later they couldn't STOP him from reading. He eventually received a scholarship from Columbia Medical School, and is 70 years old now and a well known pediatrician in Oyster Bay, Long Island. He was also one of the founders of the Summerhill Society, although the Modern Schools PRE-DATE Summerhill. All of this will be documented in the video.

At Jim's house, we rummaged through some remarkable material: letters from A.S. Neill, Emma Goldberg, a signed photograph of Prince Kropotkin, other photographs nearly 80 years old. There was one picture of a Modern School picnic, with teacher Will Durant sitting next to 14 year old student, Ida Kaufman. Later that year Durant left in a scandal involving the two. He later said that he didn't know whether to adopt her or marry her, but he married her when she turned 15. It is said she went to the wedding on roller skates. She later changed her name to Ariel, and they became the most famous husband and wife writing team of this century.

There was also an old letter from a Modern School chum of Jim's. His name had been Zack Schwartz, but in the letter he explained that he changed his name to Shaw, because there was so much anti-semitism, and it was difficult to get a teaching job back in those days. Actually, Zack had been a student at the Modern School before the the "20's, and had come back to teach when Jim was there. His wife, Lovett, had also been at the Modern School.

I had brought a video with me to Jim Dick's house. It was called, "Why do These Kids Love School," by Dorothy Fadiman. It is an excellent documentary which features the Peninsula School, in Menlo Park, California, and also describes eight public alternative schools around the United States. I have been helping Dorothy as a consultant, and put her in touch with several schools in the documentary. It was recently aired on San Francisco public television to rave reviews, and Dorothy is now traveling around the country to promote the video.

When I showed the video to Jim, he did a double take at one point. He asked me to run it back. Yes, teaching at Peninsula School was Zack Shaw and his wife Lovett, the person who had taught him to read THAT BOOK at the Modern School, nearly sixty years ago. She had had set up the weaving studio at the Modern School, and did the same at Peninsula. .

I called up Dorothy in California and asked her if those names meant anything to her. She confirmed that Zack and Lovett, now in their 80's,

did indeed teach at Peninsula. When I told her I got the names because Jim Dick recognized them, she said she had chills all over. Just think: Two people from the Modern School, one of the first alternative schools of this century, are still teaching today at an alternative school representing the newest ideas in alternative education. In a way it was an amazing coincidence, but on the other hand, it shows the true connection between the Modern School movement and the alternative schools of today.

Note: We have done a rough edit of the Modern School video with the help of Nina Hager, an intern at Downtown Community Television. We are now superimposing over 100 photographs. It's going slowly because we have practically no funds to work with, but we have had some contributions and early orders from Modern Schoolers Irving Navarre and Sophie Mozenter. Abe Bluestein, who has organized the Modern School Reunions, is preparing a mailing list of members for us.

A GROUP FROM ALBANY'S FREE SCHOOL BUILDS HOUSES IN PUERTO RICO

People at Albany's Free School have been involved in a remarkable project: They have sent a group to the island of Vieques, off the coast of Puerto Rico, to help rebuild housing that was destroyed by hurricane Hugo. The Free School students are part of a group called Building Community, and they have raised enough money for the trip and construction materials. When I was at the Eastern Regional, I went to a benefit dinner which featured a slide show about the region that they intended to help. Francis Carivan, an 11 year old Free School student going on the trip said, "I want the people of Vieques to know there are people in the United States who care about them." I heard from Albany that the group has successfully arrived in Puerto Rico. I understand that there is a second trip planned in July.

FRENCH GROUP REACHES CALIFORNIA, HEADED TO NCACS CONFERENCE

Recently I received a call from Didier Keim of Autre Chose, a French traveling school. He said that they had arrived in California, but had blown bus engines twice. The second was guaranteed, and was being replaced. He hoped that the group would be able to cross the country in the next week in time to participate in the NCACS conference near Washington, DC. Some of you may remember that Autre Chose arranged for me to spend three weeks in France with them in October to help prepare the group for their 7 month tour of the USA. Many schools have hosted the group as they have traveled around the country. Didier said that he now has a phone in the bus. The number is 916 539 1977.

NEW YORK STATE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE

I have become a member of the New York State Alternative Education

Association, and attended their conference from April 4-6 at the Concord Hotel in the Catskills. They co-sponsored the conference along with organizations from the arts and humanities, and there were over 500 in attendance. We participated in the Marketplace presentation. In a democratic meeting of about 100 alternative educators, state coordinators were introduced, and a change in the by-laws was made. At the conference I met alternative educators from "choice" schools, such as The Alternative Program (TAP) of the Fox Lane Middle School, in Bedford, NY, from predominantly "at risk" programs, such as Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene BOCES, and a new independent alternative school in Syracuse, called The New School. It just started this year, and has about 15 students, said Lisa Saile, a teacher at the school. The NYSAEA produces a directory of alternative schools and programs that has 189 listings!

About 75 people called or wrote in response to the TV show I did on WPIX's "Best Talk on Location." Most were looking for alternative schools or information about home schooling. They called and wrote from as far away as Connecticut, Upstate New York, and Vermont. Rachel Smith, who oversees home instruction for the New York State Education Department, saw the show in Albany, and sent us information on state regulations and a sample of an Individualized Home Instruction Plan.

I have talked to dozens of people about home schooling and alternative education on the Prodigy Network, an interactive system sponsored by Sears and IBM (see last AERO-GRAMME). Some people who have recently communicated with me include John Potter, founder of Somerset School in Washington DC, who founded and is now directing the New School of Northern Virginia and Alan Klein, who taught for many years at the Highland School in West Virginia is also on line (thanks also to Alan and Laura for their generous contribution to AERO). I met Irene Peterson on Prodigy who is the Head of the Newtown Montessori School, in Connecticut. She sent us a contribution and information on Montessori training. I also met Joan Gotterba, who teaches at an Independent Study High School Diploma Program in the Santa Clara Unified School District, in California. Presently, "most students work one-on-one with a teacher for an hour, the work in the computer lab for an hour, or view videos. The students under 18 meet with a teacher in small groups of about 8 students....I suppose one could catagorize all of our students as "at risk" only because the SYSTEM did not work for them. Some are gifted...there are as many reasons as there are students...A Home Schooling program is being set up for the fall. Advantages to the district will be the ADA funding. Advantages to families will be texts and supplies, and weekly meetings with a credentialed teacher. Great care is being taken by the program director to keep the school's role very low key. I am hoping it will serve as a way for homeschoolers to find each other and perhaps arrange field trips together."

Mary McCarty, a home schooler from New Jersey that I met on the Prodigy Network, send me a couple of articles about home schooling. In one article, published in a newsletter called Pacific Northwest, a librarian is quoted as saying, "I can always tell if a child is home-schooled. Kids from school ask questions because that's the assignment; home-schoolers ask because they want to know."

Katherine Hauk, writes to us of an organization called Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (AllPIE). It is a "parent to parent network, to assist and encourage parental involvement in education. The Board includes public school and private school people as well as home educators." It has a newsletter, book catalog, workshops, and a conference. Katherine also directs a New York State home schoolers organization. Her address is PO Box 59, East Chatham, NY 12060-0059.

Beryl Robare writes from Vermont that they have opened a new school called Mountain View Community School for age 3-9 in Rutland. They also sent a contribution.

A couple of months ago there was a flurry of concern on the part of home educators about a Senate bill that appeared to threaten them. Many people called me, but it turned out to be essentially a false alarm. However, I think that a lot of senators discovered a strong group of alternative educators that was ready to react quickly. One person who subsequently wrote to me was Nancy Plent, who coordinates the Unschoolers Network in New Jersey. She said it was "an impressive demonstration of how well we're able to rally support when it's needed." She also mentioned that she is working up a plan to help people in small non-profit organizations set up a retirement fund. She said, "...if you have six dedicated colleagues with any business smarts, you could create a permanent income for your work in a year or two...I think it has wonderful potential for movement people to help each other." Nancy, we'd like to hear more! Her address: 2 Smith St, Farmingdale, NJ 07727.

Kay Edelstein, who was mentioned as having trouble with her school district on Long Island in the last issue, has sent her son to the North Suffolk Montessori School. Her husband, David, is now running for schoolboard in their district! Kay has also collected the names of nearly one hundred people who are upset with situations involving their children and their schools.

Mary Ellen Sweeney, who formerly was co-editor of Holistic Education Review, tells us that she is now teaching at the University Without Walls of Regis College, in Denver, and "I absolutely love my new work!" She is also editing a newsletter called "Catalyst" which promotes "strategic change in schools" in Colorado.

Ron Miller, Editor of Holistic Education Review, writes, "I'm really impressed with your AERO idea and the newsletter you've started; it's another great contribution you are making to the alternative education movement! And I'm very inspired by your work with the Kee Way Win people." Miller is also organizing a planning conference in early June intended to bring together alternative educators of a variety of disciplines, to explore commonalties and perhaps lead to a united movement. We have been invited to attend, and will let you know how it goes.

Nancy Tellett-Royce of Macalester College, in St. Paul, MN, says that "Each year I have several students interested in teaching in alternative settings." They would like information about possible teaching locations.

Art Rosenblum publishes a newsletter called Aquarian Alternatives which centers around community living, spirituality and world peace. He is actively looking for a community for his family to join, and is about the visit the Farm, is Summertown, TN. He has also helped produce a documentary about intentional communities called "Where is Utopia?" Address: 5620 Morton St., Phila. PA 19144.

Deb Wanta of North Colorado Family Medicine says, "I am a family medicine intern looking for a niche in the community. I am graduating in June and am interested in combining alternative education and adolescent medicine. 1768 Glen Meadows Dr, Greeley, CO 80631 (303) 352 5033.

I put her in touch with Patch Adams, who, you may remember, is starting a free hospital in West Virginia with an alternative school component. His new address is Gesundheit Institute, 2630 Robert Walker Place, Arlington, VA 22207.

Josh Amundson, Farm School senior and Student Board member and Vice President of the NCACS, writes to tell us that he hopes to go to Antioch College next year. He says his class is writing a book about the caravan that brought people to the Farm.

Jim Murphy of New York City Public School's West Side High School thanks us for staying in touch with him. He says his school "has become a little more traditional over the years, as the more successful we were the larger we were coerced to become. We still have some alternative aspects but decision-making is now an "adult" activity. It's sad!" He also said he is interested in following up on alternative education teacher training ideas, having been in the ASTEP program at Indiana University. "I work with some wonderful teachers who just need a little 'turning on.' "

The staff of Growing Without Schooling have begun a swap with their

important home education publication. "We'll enjoy receiving AERO-GRAMME and using appropriate articles," writes Day Farenga for Pat and Susanah. Address: 2269 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140.

Rachael Wallach writes that she is interested in teaching at or getting involved with the development and growth of a new school. "Do you know of an interesting, unconventional, progressive program or a consensus-based school which is starting out or being thought about? Address: 2434 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21218.

The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education has announced the release of a National Directory of Internships: 3509 Haworth Dr, Suite 207, Raleigh, NC 27609.

FOREIGN COMMUNICATIONS

My printer received a strange fax from a woman in the Sudan who was looking for books in English for her 5 and a half year old son. I wrote to her, and she wrote a letter back saying that her son is Muslim, but attending a Catholic school so he can learn English, but it is hard to get books. I have sent a box of children's books to her. If other people would like to do the same, her address is Ishrag H. Dirar, Sudanese International Bank, PO Box 2775, Khartoum, Sudan.

Clarise Castello, a former Summerhill student, made a generous contribution to the Kee Way Win Project. She writes from her home in Germany that, "I'm pleased to read that Joshua Mailman did support your cause and that you did not freeze to death somewhere along your adventurous trip to Kee Way Win."

Speaking of Summerhill, Janina Lamb, another former Summerhillian, wrote to tell us that she was about to go to England to visit the school, where her youngest daughter and son now attend. Janina has successfully home schooled all of her children. Her oldest, Juno, was a student of mine at Shaker Mountain School, and will be a senior at Marlboro College at the age of 19. Rosie, the next oldest, has been home schooling, and will spend the spring term at the Lycee Autogere de Paris (I visited there when I was in France. One of their teachers, Doug Seiden, toured the USA with some students last year). Janina asked me to let people know that Summerhill would like more children from the United States, and that the rates are reasonable. Zoe Redhead, A.S. Neill's daughter, is now running the school.

fiAERO-GRAMME to Maralyn Richards, the Alternative School Advisor of the Toronto Board of Education. She sent us information on over 25 alternative programs in Toronto. In Toronto there is a procedure in place by which any group of students, parents, or teachers can start an alternative program

and have it funded by the Board of Education, if there is demonstrated interest. SEED was the first such school, back in 1970.

We've received our latest issue of Connect, Australia's "Newsletter of Youth Participation in Education." They put in a plug for AERO-GRAMME. Connect is celebrating its 10th birthday. Among other things, in this issue they mentioned that Eliot Wiggington, creator of Foxfire in Georgia, and a few of his students will be visiting Australia in July.

I recently received a packet of materials in French from Jacques Levi in Paris. My French is not all that good, but with help from John Adler, a graduate of my school who spent several years in France, I interpreted it. He represents an organization, established in the name of his late brother, Jean Levi, who started the Lycee Autogere de Paris. They are also trying to create a comprehensive directory of alternative schools, and asked us for help. We are not sure how this differs from the directory which Roger Auffrand publishes. He also asked for support for a Freinet School that is threatened with closing.

Also from France we received a newsletter from L'Arbre Voyageur about the tour which their group is taking through all the countries of Europe. Clement Bogorad, 14, a student at the home schooling Colectif Enfants-Parents is also on this trip. He took us around Paris when we visited there last year.

Bernice Singer writes from Israel that there is a similar organization to the Cadmus Life-Sharing Association which we mentioned in our last issue. It is in Great Barrington MA. The one in Israel is called "Kfar Raphael" and is near Beer Sheva. "Maybe the next time we're in the States we can get to Great Barrington. Meanwhile Dan and I are working on something similar to your newsletter designed to provide information on the Developmental Disabilities for all of Israel."

From Poland we received a letter from Agnieszka Maczka. He is 19 and a student in Cracow, expecting to graduate this year. He wants to study journalism at a college in the United States, but the costs have been too great for his parents to afford. He would hope to help in communications between "West and East", and is looking for a "sponsor who would support my studying in the USA," which he would then pay back after graduation. His address is UL. Strzelcow 19A/2, 31-422 Krakow, Poland. , , and David PorterKEE WAY WIN UPDATE

We've been staying touch with the Kee Way Win Indians of Norther Ontario as well as we can, and the news is mixed. A school has been started there, but the volunteer teacher has recently quit, reportedly because of the isolation. Chris Kakagamic, a tribal council member who lives at the Sandy

Lake Reservation at the other end of the Lake gave me the news.

Fortunately, when I called, David Thompson was visiting. He is a tribal council member who lives at Kee Way Win and was about to return there. When I was there, we talked about how the school could be run using community resources, and David said that he felt that he could implement that when he returned across the ice.

Meanwhile, Chief Geordi Kakepetum is in Sioux Lookout, working on getting the Province of Ontario to take responsibility for the tribe, and help with housing and education. We have supplied him with information about how other native run schools are funded.

At the moment it is impossible to communicate directly with Kee Way Win because they have not been able to pay the bill for the microwave phone.

I talked with Cain Linklater once. He is the 12 year old who helped organize the ping pong program, and he said they have had at least 8 more sessions since I left. But he also gave me the tragic news that a cousin of his had left left Kee Way Win with his family to go to Winnapeg, looking for work and schooling. After his father had left them and his mother hadn't returned from several days of looking for work, they found that he had committed suicide. He was 15. The situation at Kee Way Win is still urgent.

NYC CHANCELLOR FERNANDEZ

In February I received a letter from Joseph Fernandez, New York City's new Chancellor. I had met him at last year's Alternative Schools Conference in Orlando, Florida. In his letter he said, "...As you can imagine, I have been quite busy settling in as Chancellor, " and he asked me to meet with his staff to explore possibilities. Since that time I have met with Ms. Amina Abdur-Raman, Deputy Chancellor, Steve Phillips, Director of New Yorks 21 alternative high schools, and Anthony Alverado, Superintendent of District 2 (and the person who initiated changes in District 4). Among other things, Ms Abdur-Rahman complained that many districts in the city did not understand what their true options were in restructuring schools.

In a related development, Julian Wilder, a professor at Adelphi College, read AERO-GRAMME and decided to set up an appointment for me with Jeffrey Kane, the Dean of Education. Wilder, who was once associated with Long Island's Learning Tree School, was particularly interested in following up on the Alternative School Teacher Training idea. which I may be able to help.

ALTERNATIVE TEACHER TRAINING, the School Teacher Training idea. We've

developed an idea for a summer program that would train teachers who want to teach in New York City's alternative schools, and would give them temporary certification. We've submitted it for comment to Fernandez' office. Also, I will be speaking at Adelphi on alternative education on April 26th.

Also related was a trip that I just took to Keene, New Hampshire to celebrate Antioch New England Graduate School's 25th anniversary. I graduated from the school with an MAT when it was in Putney, Vermont. Antioch New England now has some remarkable programs, including off-site professional development, Waldorf training, and a Doctoral program in psychology. But as luck would have it, I got to talk to Dr. Guskin, President of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He was very interested in the alternative school teacher training idea, and asked me to develop some ideas (Guskin is credited with suggesting the idea of the Peace Corps to President Kennedy). One possibility would be to work it directly through Antioch's external Masters' program, administered by Jackson Kytle, Antioch's Vice President, whom I also met again at Keene.

Several people have written to me to express interest in the idea of establishing a teacher training program for alternative education. I think this could even include home educators. One way or another, it needs to be established if we are going to make the changes that must be made.

I've attended several meetings of the Long Island Home Schoolers Association, and was particularly impressed when 19 children participated in a talent show at the home of Lynn Rudin.