

Special
Changing Schools Section



THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

The Magazine of the
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
(Formerly AERO-gramme)
Fall 2000: \$4.95 #30

www.EDREV.org



IDEC IN JAPAN!

(International Democratic Education Conference)

Jessie Jacson Summit • New Public Alternatives Organization
900 Homeschoolers Camp at the Sea • New Gatto Book

CONTENTS:

BIGGEST EVER IDEC HELD IN JAPAN By Ian Warder	
The EFFE Conference in Denmark	
30 th Annual INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE	
National Summit on Zero-Tolerance Organized by Jesse Jackson	
Mail and Communications Edited by Carol Morley	
Home Education News	
Public Alternatives, Charter School News, Other Public Alternatives	
International News and Communications: England, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland	
Alumni Stories The War Years at Summerhill, By Peter Kyng	
Teachers, Jobs, and Internships	
Conferences	
CHANGING SCHOOLS SECTION	
IMPROMPTU DEMOCRACY: : The Home Education Seaside Festival in Charmouth, England	
INTERVIEW WITH HENNING DOCHWEILER, OF ASKOV FOLK HIGH SCHOOL, DENMARK	
The Danish Education System, by Robert Powell	
A Brief History of the School of Living by Rita Jane Leasure	
Book Reviews	
The Underground History of American Education, by John Taylor Gatto	
Sahasasia, by James DeMeo	
Challenging the Giant: Volume IV, By Mary Leue	
Homeschool Your Child For Free, By LauraMaery Gold & Joan M. Zielinski	
Reflections on the Sudbury School Concept	
Edited by Mimsy Sadofsky & Daniel Greenberg	
A Clearer View	
by Daniel Greenberg	
Starting a Sudbury School	
by Mimsy Sadofsky & Daniel Greenberg	
Creating Learning Communities, From A Coalition for Self Learning	
My Friend Lenny, A Memoir of my Life in Music, with personal stories about Leonard Bernstein, Mike Wallace, Paul Simon and others, By Ouida Blatt Mintz	

The Education Revolution

The Magazine of the **Alternative Education Resource Organization** (Formerly **AERO-gramme**)

417 Roslyn Rd., Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

ISSN # 10679219

phone: 516-621-2195 or 800-769-4171 fax: 516-625-3257

e-mail: jerryaero@aol.com Web site: <http://www.edrev.org>

Editor: Jerry Mintz

Design Editor: Albert Lamb & John Kaiser

Mail and Communications Editor: Carol Morley

Director of Information and Communications: Steve Rosenthal

Printed by: Sir Speedy Printing, New Hyde Park, New York

Webmaster: Peter Christopher

ADVISORY BOARD

Alexander Adamsky, Mary Addams, Chris Balch, Fred Bay, Patrice Creve, Anne Evans, Patrick Farenga, Phil Gang, John Gatto, Herb Goldstein, Dan Greenberg, Josh Hornick, Jeffrey Kane, Albert Lamb, Dave Lehman, Mary Leue, Ron Miller, Pat Montgomery, Ann Peery, John Potter, Mary Anne Raywid, John Scott, Tim Seldin, Elina Sheppel, Andy Smallman, Sidney Solomon, Nick Stanton, Corinne Steele, Tom Williams

Introduction to this issue

This is our 30th issue. AERO is now ten years old. In the three month period covered by this issue I did more traveling than I ever did before, perhaps because there is more going on in educational alternatives than ever before. During this time I participated in

- the Home Education Seaside Festival in England, with over 900 home educators camped out by the sea for a week
- a one week stint as Summerhill
- participation in the European Forum for Freedom in Education in Denmark,
- a trip to the Mohawk reservation at Akwesasne to study how the Native-run schools we first helped them pioneer in 1971 were doing
- a summit on Zero Tolerance in Washington, D.C, hosted by Jesse Jackson,
- participation in the International Alternative Education Conference in Minnesota, primarily public alternatives
- participation in the International Democratic Education Conference in Japan, with students and teachers from at least 15 countries.

The Mohawk story will be covered in the next issue. We tried to cover as much of this as possible in this issue. We hope you enjoy it. Please give us feedback. JM

“From Typhoon to Eclipse in Japan”

When we arrived in Japan it was raining and we discovered that we actually arrived at the beginning of a typhoon. We were worried that some of the participants wouldn't be able to come because of that, but luckily the typhoon went north of us. Then on the last day of the post-conference, twelve days later, there was a total lunar eclipse. In a sense maybe all of us who are working for a revolution in education are now in the middle of turmoil, but in the end, the symbolism will be that our kind of education will eclipse the old education.

To many of the people who came from outside the country, the conference at first seemed overly structured, over-organized, and consisted of the talking-head type of approach where you had a speaker at the front and then people just listening. In retrospect it seems that the purpose of early part of the conference was to promote alternative education in Japan and to get publicity for this idea and to demonstrate it for Japanese people. The idea was that the latter part of the conference would be for the participants to communicate with each other.

One of the highlights, on the evening of the 14th was a beautifully laid out final party with all kinds of food piled up and the inspirational singing and dancing of an Israeli song, the translation of which means “Peace Everyone,” with Israelis and Palestinians, among others, singing and dancing.

One of the most impressive participants was Amin, a 15 year old “working child” who lives in the Delhi train station and survives by picking bottles. When he's earned enough to survive for the day, he goes to Butterflies, which helps provide him education. He's lived on his own since age 11. He gave a workshop on how the street children have formed a democratic

union.

This was the largest IDEC conference yet. To help democratic schools from low income areas come to the IDEC, Kageki Asakura said that he raised \$100,000 from foundations. This did not include the \$20,000 that we raised through AERO from the Edwards Foundation. The total budget for the conference was \$250,000. The Tokyo Shure students had raised about \$10,000 through fundraising events during the year; the rest of it was from income that was generated by the conference itself. Schools from England, USA, Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Hungary, Guatemala, Thailand, Korea, Philippines, India, and several from Japan participated in this year's IDEC.

To prepare for next year's conference AERO is planning to work with the people putting on next year's IDEC. We hope to quickly produce a good website and do everything else we can to help develop the IDEC network over the next few months. Any suggestions or offers of help are welcome. We appreciate the following notes by Summerhill staff member Ian Warder. JM



The second largest Budha in Japan (r)

BIGGEST EVER IDEC HELD IN JAPAN



Or, 14, from Israel, plays and sings at IDEC



Japanese students man "Free Space"



The Olympic Center, in Tokyo



David Gamper, Edwards Foundation, which supported the IDEC

By Ian Warder

Groggy with jet lag, we in the Summerhill contingent finally arrived at the Marion Conference center in downtown Ginza. It was halfway through the first day of the IDEC conference. Someone found us headphones and told us how to access the English simultaneous translation, and we settled in to listen to the panel of children from around the world. Immediately it was apparent that this IDEC was at least starting out on a different scale - the hall had 1000 people in it.

We saw a Summerhillian, **Misha**, sitting ahead of us in the audience. Ex-Summerhillian **Tomo** appeared to say hello - he was taking photographs for a Japanese news agency. Other familiar faces from last year's IDEC smiled at us. The students on the panel were **Hiroshi** from Japan, **Izzy** from **Sands School** in England, a person from **Tamariki School**, in New Zealand, one from **Butterflies**, in India, and Or from **Hadera** in Israel. Following the children's panel, we had a dance and song by the Israeli and Palestinian delegations: "Shalom" which means Peace, with the whole audience joining in. The highlight of the day for me was what followed: a great dance by about forty members of **Tokyo Shure**, our hosts for this IDEC conference. They had such great dynamic energy and enthusiasm - and it was a fitting, uplifting end to the first day.



International water fight in a park in Tokyo



Tomo Usuda, Summerhill graduate, who covered the IDEC for a news service

My first sense of a culture clash with the Japanese way of doing things immediately followed as we were unceremoniously ushered out of the hall on the dot of 4pm. Such a contrast with their unending hospitality, politeness and willingness to help! The conference and participants moved to Olympic Memorial center in another part of the city. (Sangubashi, part of Shibuya, near Yoyogi park). The logistics of this conference were awesome - 300 people moved across town in coaches, many with their luggage. For myself, the next hours and some of the following day necessitated solving several logistic problems. For example, how do four people sharing a room cope with one key, or why can I only bathe between 4 and 10pm?

The **Summerhill** presentation was scheduled on the second day at 7pm, and after conferring with Misha, we three, (**Ian**, **Lenka** and **Misha**), firmed up our plan. Ex-Summerhill teacher **Yoski**, a native Japanese, would be translating and Tomo would also be there, taking photos as well as talking. About 130

people attended the talk, where we had created a display of photographs, posters and press cuttings. I diligently covered the white board with a detailed chronology of the last year's events providing the background. In true Summerhill fashion, we set up the chairs in a circle, so everyone could see each other. After asking everyone what they wanted to know, we talked a little about what Summerhill is like, and then talked about the events from the inspection to the Tribunal. We allowed lots of time for questions, yet there was still not enough time for them all. Again at the end of the talk we were rushed out by the IDEC staff, interrupting the time for more contact and questions with the participants. Tomo and his mother invited us out for a drink after this, which turned into a full scale Japanese meal - sushi, sake, plum wine and strange vegetables. A great end to the evening and a good start for the conference.

By now we were starting to meet some of the many new schools and people attending the conference. The free School Fair the next day helped this - I met **Richard** and **Iku**, teachers at the **Tutorial School**, based in Santa Fe, New Mexico - an 18 year old democratically run day school. Iku was Japanese, so had been able to set up a tour of Japan for their group; they had visited the coast, cities and mountains.

Twenty-two people came from Israel where democratic schools are flourishing. Part of the reason for this is due to the initiative of the Institute for Democratic Education, which helps state schools become democratic, and is also starting new democratic schools. The Institute was started by **Yakov Hecht** and others; Yakov started Israel's first state-run democratic school, Hadera. The people from Israel were tremendous - great solidarity, intensity and sense of purpose. Hope Flowers School of Bethlehem was represented by the late **Hussein Issa's** wife and daughter, and we discussed our experience of planning the Summerhill conference, to help them with their plans for the next IDEC in Palestine and Israel.

Students from many schools were represented - two from Summerhill, (once **George** had arrived), three from **Sands**, four from Israel, three from New Zealand, six from Poland, six from **Haja Center** in Korea, as well as students from India, Phillipines, Hungary, Thailand, USA, Russia and the Ukraine. And of course Japan. The Korean students from Haja center in Seoul were very lively, reflecting Haja Center's hi tech facility and approach. It is for students 14 and upward and trains them using six multimedia studios. They receive training in any

aspect of multimedia - video, sound, music, computers and so on - from professionals in those fields. We watched a very cool video made by one of the students, combining animation and live footage.

The Tokyo Shure students were working incredibly hard organizing everything. There was tremendous interest from many Japanese visiting the conference, as well as from the press and TV. In the first three days at the Olympic Center there were many lectures with a great number of them addressing issues pertinent to education in Japanese society: school refusal, bullying, home schooling, and 'sociality' (acquiring social skills). Most of these were formal lectures without much discussion - I (and other participants) regretted this lack of discussion and dialogue in the first few days.

After three days, the conference moved to another location, the Tega Center, set next to a forest on the northern outskirts of Tokyo. Now the size of IDEC was reduced to about 350 people. (There were only a total of 150 at Summerhill's conference) The logistics of the transition went quite smoothly. After arriving at the new location, cultural differences again sprang up, the first item on the agenda was a video about the new center which included a detailed explanation of how to fold a dirty sheet when you leave the center. In retrospect, this was obviously an expected custom in Japan, but everyone else could not understand the reason for it. A meeting after supper clarified that it was to make counting and stacking the sheets easier, but not before much laughter as a Tokyo Shure student gave a 'live' demonstration of the (highly) recommended sheet folding technique.



Lucrecia, graduate of Naleb School, Guatamala

The next 3 days of the conference were when the 'real' IDEC started for me, for the more relaxed surroundings allowed flowing discussions to

bloom. Yakov and the others from the Institute for Democratic Education put on the most interesting workshops for me, both on 'What is Democratic Education?' Mundane or obvious though this question may sound, the stimulus was in trying to find a common definition that unified the approaches of different schools. As each person present defined what they understood 'democratic education' to mean, it appeared there was a commonality centering around the following core ideas:

- * Human rights, especially of children
- * The way they are lived and implemented in each school.

We discussed how everyone, not just democratic schools, agrees in principle about human rights, but often do not act upon their beliefs. For this reason it was very important to recognize not only the importance of human rights, but also how people implement and live them. The value and respect for human rights was expressed in many ways, as was the process by which they were established, supported and maintained by each school. For example, at Summerhill, the children have control over nearly all aspects of their lives at the school. (School finances, hiring of teachers and safety are excluded) The democratic structures in place, (two weekly meetings, ombudsmen, a small boarding community where all are equal), and the culture of freedom, (typified by the freedom of each child to choose whether to attend lessons or not), means that the precepts in Article 12 of the UN Children's Rights Charter are already totally established at Summerhill.



Amin, 15 year old "working child" from India gives workshop

However, in other countries the situation is different. I learned that in Guatemala, there is a great distrust of governing institutions and their failure to rise above corruption and exist as working entities that support justice and equality. To com-

bat this, the **Naleb School** has created its own government system with constitution, judicial and governing branches. This allows the students to experience the institution of government actually working thus starting to undermine the distrust, fear and apathy towards government in their society.

In other countries, 'social' human rights are emphasized. Although not specifically mentioned in the human rights charter, these rights of living - survival needs of food, water, income and health - must be met. In India, (and other countries), many children have to work to satisfy these basic needs and are thus denied their right to be a child as well as their right to be educated. **CWC, (Concern for Working Children)**, and **Butterflies** both address these issues, and have set up schools that give working children the chance to educate themselves as well as work. Again, this support for human rights at this most basic level has to be included as an example within the broad definition of democratic education.



Kostia from Kluch School in Moscow



Oleg Belin of Stork School with Ukranian and Russian student

Before this definition becomes so broad as to be useless, the Israeli example of how they are trying to implement particular democratic education that totally supports children's choice and freedom reminded me of where we as democratic schools can go. Each democratic school is inevitably a torchbearer in its own country for democratic rights.

Two other highlights were the talk by **Sayaka**, a 21 year old Japanese student who traveled alone when she was 14 and 15 to visit a number of democratic schools around the world. She found they were not as she would have wished and asked some difficult questions: how can democratic schools be more inclusive, more stimulating, more creative? How can they support those who don't fit in - who ask difficult questions? How can they



Tokyo Shure students prepare for finale



Covert family, homeschoolers from Osaka, met us in Kyoto after IDEC

evaluate themselves? Many people were stimulated into long discussion of these and other issues.

The other highlight was the presentation by the **Democratic Youth Society of Harei Ephraim**. This is a boarding community of secondary aged students, 14-18, who live together democratically. The members of the community set their own rulescommunity living, in a similar way to Summerhill. The difference is that the community members attend a 'regular' school in the day. The communal living arrangement was very satisfying for the students, while making them anxious to have the same freedom in their schooling.

When the IDEC closed, I felt really connected to many of the people there - I had talked with many of them and the sharing of experience and aspirations was stimulating and inspiring. It was very valuable to meet such a great group of people. Many people returned to stay at the Olympic Center in the more central part of Tokyo, giving themselves a few days to explore and shop more.

The Tokyo Shure students had undoubtedly organized a tremendously successful conference. In the course of talking with some of the Shure teachers, it was revealed that the students' tremendous openness and enthusiasm for communication was also accompanied by pain and frustration as they experienced the limits of their own English. This was not readily apparent because, despite this, they continually helped and talked with everyone at the conference.

On the last night before we left, the remaining participants (from Israel, UK and USA), were invited to a party at their school, a final chance to see the Shure School, and eat, talk and sing together one more time before the next IDEC. Three of the students, one each from USA, Israel and Japan, learnt the jazz song, 'Take Five', and played it for us.

For me, the value of IDEC is hearing how other schools are implementing democratic education, in sharing our own approach and being enriched, and in turn enriching others through this exchange. This is true for staff and students alike. I really hope more students from Summerhill can experience the value of IDEC. Next year's conference in Israel and Palestine already looks tremendously exciting.



The EFFE Conference in Denmark

The **European Federation for Freedom in Education** held a conference in Denmark this summer, which I attended. On the first day there was a talk by an under-secretary of education, **Henrik Kober**, who gave a lot of statistics about the Danish school system and alternative education. In the evening, we provided our own entertainment with various people singing and playing musical instruments from a lot of the different countries that were represented, singing in German, Danish, English, Russian, etc. I spent a lot of time catching up on news with **Tanya Kovaleva** from Russia. She started an alternative school in Tomsk, Siberia, and is now working on setting up a democratic school in Israel for the Russian population.

On the second morning of the conference there was a talk by Askov Director **Henning Dochweiler** about the different types of alternative schools, describing each type. When they talked about the residential 'folk' high school, the folkehøjskole, it was sort of depressing in tone since it was implied that they have kind of lost their purpose, as they don't give college-type credit. They were originally set up to educate the illiterate 'folk' or general population. Yet they represent a very open kind of learning which, I think, represents the learning of the future. Somehow they have not quite figured out how to ride that wave into the future and the numbers of people attending are dwindling and, since these schools don't offer exam-based qualifications, the government is cutting its subsidy. Meanwhile the government pays 100% of the costs for kids going to university.

I spent time talking to the director of the lilleskoles, or small schools, which are the closest things to real alternative schools and democratic schools in Denmark.

He says there are about 45 of them and 700 free schools, or independent schools. Approximately 80,000 kids out of about 700,000 in the country go to these schools. He is actually one quarter American Indian through his grandfather. He didn't know what tribe it might be from, but from his description it sounds almost definitely Mohawk.

For a full description of the different kinds of schools in Denmark today see Robert Powell's article in the Changing Schools section.



Under-secretary Henrik Kober and Askov Director Henning Dochweiler

After the EFFE conference I had made arrangements to have **Peter Holst** pick me up in a town called Slagelse (Slayentsa). He then drove me to his town of Holbaek which is in the northern part of the island of Sjælland (Zealand) where Copenhagen is located. Peter teaches at a regular public school. He brought me to his headmaster's house, a man named **Barger Friis**, where we had a very interesting evening. I was able to get a sense of what the public schools are like here and what their attitude is toward the independent schools.



Barger Friis, Headmaster of Stenus Gymnasium

It sounds like they have a fairly decent working

relationship. In fact Barger's school, **Stenus Gymnasium**, has a good working relationship with schools located on either side of it, both of which are independent schools. One of them is one of the little schools, a very innovative school, which Barger's daughter went to until this year. Her name is Lena and she's 13 and was very attentively interested in the discussion that we had. They gave me a little geography of Denmark and the different parts of it and the different islands.

On Monday I went with Barger to his high school. This is an 800-student school with students aged 16 to 18, a pretty large school with a lot of facilities. It's the only high school for Holbaek. There were just a few students at the school, practicing for their tests or in gym, doing warm up routines. Otherwise there was really no school.

I was able to get my email using a computer in his office while he went out shopping. He was buying seafood for the meal for the evening. It was a great meal, actually, salmon and shrimp from Iceland. One of the things that he told me that was surprising is that giving detention or extra homework as punishment is illegal in Denmark, it's unheard of and it's not allowed. It seems to him quite an admission on the side of Americans that if detention is a punishment, then being in school is a punishment.

He then brought me over to the little school next door and I met the director there, **Per Kristensen**. I looked around the school. Later in the day Barger brought me to Per's house where we had lunch and were joined by Peter Holst. They live next door to each other. Per's son was also there, he's 17. He went to the little school until he started going to the Gymnasium. One of the things I discovered is that there is a program available for students 14 years or older in Denmark where they can design their own programs, including travel, and be supervised by a teacher. They can then go do an internship someplace. The Danish government pays for all of the participants.

Afterwards, we went over to Peter's house and I had a brief conversation with his older son, who is 18, who had also gone to the little school. He's now one of the two student representatives at the Gymnasium. He said he got to be a representative because there already was one and nobody else was interested in being the other one so his friend asked him if he would join him. Just an indication of the kind of apathy there is about student participation.

The next morning I went down to the high school but there was really only testing going on there. So almost immediately Barger walked me over to the little school. The kindergarten through second graders were off on a one-week camping trip as well as another group of third to fifth graders, so they only had sixth through tenth

grades at the school. The tenth graders were taking tests. In the testing system there, they bring people in from other parts of Denmark, they're called sensors, which are basically testers. The testing is more like performance and portfolio, there is very little in the way of writing. The ninth grade worked on a project all year studying the country of Wales, and then they actually traveled to Wales for several weeks.

Per and some of the schools students showed me around. They said that they felt that the eighth through tenth graders had a lot of power in the school and they had meetings in which they more or less had to be listened to. One of the big proposals was to double the size of the eighth through tenth grades to have a bigger peer group and that has been approved. They'll be building a new building to expand it. There's a big waiting list

for students to go into the little school. People almost have to sign up on the day after they're born.

The high school has a lot of outdoor grounds. They say that they have an expectation that students should always know where the teacher is, rather than the teacher having to follow the students around. The school lets the kids go off into the woods and walk around a little bit and build projects. They showed one place where they were doing some Indian stuff and had a campfire in a little clearing.

We went to a lunch with some of the teachers and the testers and then Barger drove me to Copenhagen, which is about an hour's drive, and brought me to **Det Frie Gymnasium**. It is a completely democratic high school. **Anna**, a member of the Danish student union and a student in the school, met me there. There wasn't too much going on by the time I got there at a little past two, but I got to meet the new headmaster, **Ejnar Ritterband**, who had been selected by a democratic vote of the students. It had come down to two final candidates and they voted on which one they wanted to hire. He'd only recently started his job. The previous director who'd been there for ten years has gone off to start another school. In all these cases there was compulsory class attendance but the students didn't seem to mind. They seem to enjoy their classes. The system in Denmark is quite structured, particularly if you want to go to university. You have to

One of the things that he told me that was surprising is that giving detention or extra homework as punishment is illegal in Denmark, it's unheard of and it's not allowed. It seems to him quite an admission on the side of Americans that if detention is a punishment, then being in school is a punishment.

go through and take all the regular courses and then score high on the final tests. Not a great percentage of people go on to university; a lot of the others go into vocational programs or go to work. But whenever you want to learn something in Denmark, there always seems to be a program that the government will pay for to help you do it.



Per Kristensen, Headmaster of Holbaek Lille Skole



Ejnar Ritterband, Headmaster of Det Frie Gymnasium

On this day Anna was set to be at home studying for a biology test. She came over to show me around. The students are very proud of their school and all quite politically involved and that's what attracts them to this particular school, which is in an old dental college in a little bit of a seedy part of town. The new director seemed to be quite interested in becoming part of the IDEC and joining our network. This school was the only truly democratic one I saw in Denmark. JM

30th Annual INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE HELD IN MINNESOTA New National Organization Created!

From June 22-24 the 30th annual alternative education conference was held in Minneapolis. The organizers called it The International Association for Alternative Schools and Programs but in the past it was called the International Alternative Education Conference. It was held at the Thunderbird Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota. The name-confusion underlines the historically decentralized nature of the group. This was the 30th annual conference but it has not been, up to this point, an actual organization. There have been conferences every year, each year organized by a different state association of alternative schools. The Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs organized this one. The General Mills Foundation was one of the foundations that supported this conference and gave them \$5,000

There were 350 people at the conference. There would have been more, including a number of students, but there was a strike of the service workers at the hotel just three days before the conference and some people were not willing to cross the picket line. The organizers tried to move the conference at the last minute but could not find another place to move it to with everybody on their way. Those of us who came found ways to support the strikers.

To me the key aspect of this conference was the fact that there would be an attempt again to create a national organization for this group. In light of the growth in influence of the National Standards Movement, it had seemed to me that we needed to have an organization like this to fight against that approach. Next year's conference will be in Oregon, sponsored by the Oregon and Washington associations.

Vicky Phillips who is the director of personnel development in Carmel Valley, California, put on the first workshop I went to. She talked about four basic learning style types and she made lists of characteristics of these various learning personality types. People picked their own and she described each one of them, and they were very apt descriptions. One of the key points about it is that she said that 85% of the so-called at-risk learners

have a personality, temperament, and learning style shared by only 7% of mainstream teachers. So a style that is called 'problem' or 'at-risk' is maybe just a 'different' style.

Alfie Kohn was the keynote speaker and he talked about his concept of children being "punished by rewards." He said when you praise people it is not necessarily much different from criticizing them or punishing them, that it still makes them dependent on judgements that happen to them outside themselves, rather than things that are based on their own interests. Alfie Kohn's website is alfiekohn.com. Kohn said that a crucial book to read was Howard Gardner's *Unschooled Minds*.

On the second night they took everybody for a ride on a paddleboat down the Mississippi for a couple of hours. That was fun and I had some interesting conversations with people. I had a long discussion on the paddle wheeler with **Wayne Jennings** who is a year away from retiring from an organization, which he set up, called Designs for Learning. It is an organization that provides the umbrella for charter schools. They look after six charter schools in Minnesota, which run according to their concept. The concept is of community involvement and a learner-centered approach. They do all the paperwork and logistical work for these programs. He has done some consulting for out-of-state programs and agrees that what is needed is an organization like his that can perhaps operate nationally to help create charters which are learner centered, maybe even democratic.

After Alfie Kohn's talk there had been a workshop called "The Future of a National Alternative School Movement," hosted by **David Bly** who is the past president of the Minnesota Association. Out of that discussion there seemed to come a consensus that we should take another stab at creating a national organization. This was just a wide-ranging discussion, with a breakfast meeting scheduled the next morning to try to get into the nuts and bolts of it.

The breakfast meeting was at 8:00 in the morning but was pretty well attended by people representing a dozen states. We got through the agenda and decided to create an organization to help encourage learning alternatives, but not necessarily just pegged for public alternatives, as has been the de facto case for this group. We set up an unscheduled third meeting for the next day during a slot in which one of the workshops had been canceled. They decided to call the new organization the **International Alternative Learning Association**. A lot of the responsibility was put on a Minnesota contingent to put together the new organization and figure out how it would be run. AERO agreed to set up a listserve for IALA, and to make out database available for its development.



Dave Lehman of Alternative Community School in Ithaca

Dave Lehman came from New York and participated in the discussions about the new national organization. He was one of the first to suggest that a national organization be created back in 1986. At that time he received resistance from various places. Some states were resisting a national organization, and I think the primary resistance was from people from the choice-type public alternatives. They were afraid that the at-risk group, if there was a national organization, would tend to force them out. But the consensus at this meeting was that this was not something that would happen anymore.

Don Glines, who is a long veteran of this conference, made a presentation on the **Wilson School**, which he founded in the early 70s. It was on the campus of Mankato State University, in south-central Minnesota. This school was a public school but the first thing he did when he got there was to disconnect the bell. He took all the equipment and put it in a big pile in the middle of the gym to emphasize and demonstrate that his intention was to start all over again. The school had no required attendance or courses, no grades or tests, and ran effectively for six years as a public school of choice. People could also choose a traditional school in the same area but tended to opt for the Wilson School. It finally closed when Mankato State needed more room to expand its college. He just set up an archive at Mankato State for information on the Wilson School and they subsequently had a reunion of about 350 former students.

Allen November was another speaker. He talked mostly about technology and how it is going to change everything. He also talked about an approach he has used in his own classrooms. His approach was simply to ask his students to find problems to solve. He also said, among other things, that teachers and schools should stop assigning homework – it's a bad idea.

November said an important site to go to is

thinkquest.org, which is a website of children's websites. He said the problem with adults is that they speak digital with an accent. They didn't grow up with it.

The conference was walking distance from the Mall of America and I went over there a couple of times. The last time I found a place where I could do my email. I was actually not too impressed with it – it really is just like a big mall with a bunch of rides in the middle of it.

I'm looking forward to next year's conference in Oregon at the Inn of the 7th Mountain, Bend. The site looks really beautiful. It will be on the last weekend of June. To join the new listserve or for more information on IALA, contact the **AERO** office. JM

2001:
An Education Odyssey
The International Conference
on Alternatives in Education

June 28- July 1, 2001

Inn of The Seventh Mountain,, Bend Oregon
www.7thmtn.com www.covisitors.com

Sponsored by:
The Oregon Association for Alternatives in Education
(OAE)
<http://www.alternative-education.org>
360 574-4017
1201 NW 109th St, Vancouver, WA 98695

Four strands:

- * *Innovation and Choice Within the Public School System*
- * *New Roles and Responsibilities in a Paradigm of Choice*
- * *Alternative learning opportunities: Meeting the Needs of All Learners*
- * *Beyond Schooling in the 21st Century*

Proposals or Registration may be sent to:
IASC 2001, 1201 NW 109th St, Vancouver, WA 98695
Before May 1, 2001: \$199
More Info: Bob Lockridge at boblock@teleport.com
PO Box 98, LaPine, OR 97739

NATIONAL SUMMIT ON ZERO-TOLERANCE ORGANIZED BY JESSE JACKSON



*Jesse Jackson greets Jery Mintz in
Washington D.C.*

We were invited to Washington, D.C. to a National Summit called “Opportunities Suspended – The Devastating consequences of Zero-Tolerance in School Discipline Policies,” organized by Jesse Jackson and co-sponsored by the Advancement Project, the Civil Rights Project of Harvard University, and the Rainbow Push Coalition.

Jackson and **Jonathan Kozol** were two of the speakers at the National Press Club at a pre-summit press conference. The thrust of the argument was that, minority kids are being disproportionately targeted and suspended and expelled from school with the zero-tolerance policy. They felt this was due to racism, and the statistics they presented certainly backed up their thesis. There are a very disproportionate number of minority students targeted by suspension and expulsion policies.

I have no argument with that, but I made the point from the floor that perhaps this is not getting to the root of the problem, that there is indeed a minority being targeted here, but it is not only black kids or Hispanic kids, it is all children. They have been systematically disempowered and this is the root of the violence, anger, frustration and of the lack of learning.

On the cab ride over to the Summit at the Tower Hilton was a woman from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Her name is **Julie S. Thomerson**. She is involved with the laws that are being made by state legislatures about these things and seems to be in a very interesting position.

They started a plenary session in which people outlined the same theme, backed by statistics, that in most states minority kids have double, triple, or quadruple the rate of suspension than that of white kids. At one point one of the speakers, Valerie Johnson from the University of Illinois, standing in for Jesse Jackson, made reference to my point, and speculated that perhaps there was a deeper cause to all of this.

Just before a supper a young woman who is 17 said she was suspended from school for fighting even though she was an honor student. Originally she was going to be suspended for a year, and then she was suspended for three months. She now intends to go to college and has graduated from high school. She was not too happy that she went back to that school, but she did graduate from there.



Two students suspended under “Zero Tolerance,”

At the dinner a young man named **Roosevelt** said he was the captain of his basketball team in Decatur, Illinois and one of seven kids who were kicked out of the school for fighting in the stands. He said all of the kids were put in alternative schools and he was sent to one called **Futures Unlimited**. Even though this is an at-risk type alternative, it has quite a long waiting list and they had to have a special dispensation to get these kids into the alternative schools. All seven kids went to three different alternative schools. Roosevelt said that he loved this school. He liked the attention he was given, the smallness of it, his relationship with the teachers, the field trips they went on, and he has just graduated. He said that the other students felt the same.

Keith Anderson who is involved with alternative education in the Chicago area, said that all of the seven kids had done very well in the alternative schools and liked them very much. I was concerned when I heard about this situation originally, from a distance, that alternative education was being given a bad name, and he agreed that the public school system would like to think that the alternative schools are just a dumping ground for their problem kids. JM

Mail and Communications

Edited by Carol Morley

Roger Hart, a New York professor and one of the speakers at the IDEC in Japan, gave me a copy of a book put together by students around the world under 20 years of age. It is called *We're in Print, The Whole Story of Kids by kids for kids*. It is a combination literary magazine and writing manual. It is by the Young Grapes (Global Reporters Artists Producers and editors). City University of New York, Graduate School, 33 W 42nd St, NY, NY 10036, Ph: 212 642-2970. www.bway.net/~shorty/grapes.html -JM

Unlike students who were suspended or forced to write papers for boycotting the MCAS exam, Harwich Middle School teacher **Jim Bougas** was suspended for two weeks for refusing to administer the exam. For more information visit: http://www.bostonherald.com/news/local_regional/educ05162000.htm

Last year, **Robin Martin** teamed up with the **National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (NCACS)** to begin exploring partnership ideas for an outreach program called **Learning Circles**. The purpose of this program is to serve as a motivating force and resource for a grassroots change in education that brings small groups of people together in local areas for workshops and ongoing study circles to explore what it means to learn and grow as whole persons in an ever-changing society, and thus create educational options for our children that best reflect our values as individuals and communities. While similar in many ways to folk education for adults, this endeavor will be more geared toward parents and K-12 educators. They have formed a small NCACS committee, and started an e-mail listserv to correspond about intentions and efforts for outreach. If you are interested in facilitating a Learning Circle in your local area, you are encouraged to join this list, by sending a blank email to NCACS-circles-subscribe@egroups.com. If you think that you would like to start a Learning Circle in your area, or learn more about what's involved, please join their mailing list, and let them know how they can support you with flyers or promotional materials, or simply moral support and encouragement. Write to: Robin Martin, 209 S. Oak #101, Ames, IA 50010. Email: robin@learning-options.net.

The **21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC)** program is a grant initiative from the US Department of Education that seeks to provide expanded learning opportunities for children in safe, drug-free and supervised environments. Over 1200 community learning centers offer students programs in tutoring, community service, technology, recreation, and character development. Among them are: a Native American Arts Institute at a public school located on a Navajo reservation in Teec Nos Pos, AZ; a musical theater production in LeRoy, IL; kayaking and other adventures in Lake County, CA; and spelunking in Glasgow, KY. For more information, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit www.ed.gov/21stcccl/.

The **Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program** is sponsored by the Government of Japan to promote understanding between the United States and Japan. In 2001, the FMF Teacher Program will sponsor 600 first through twelfth grade American educators for fully funded, three-week study visits in Japan. By exposing American teachers and administrators to the Japanese culture and education system, the FMF program inspires participants with fresh ideas for curriculum development. If you are interested in receiving more information about FMF, please call 1-888-527-2636 or fmf@iie.org.

With 124 adult members and 73 homes, **Bryn Gweled Homesteads** is one of the largest intentional communities in the US today, and one of the oldest. BG celebrated its 60th anniversary this July by holding an old-fashioned reunion, which attracted former members and residents from all over the US and from several foreign countries. Bryn Gweled (Welsh for "Hill of Vision") is a 240-acre landscape of sloping hills and winding roads in Upper Southampton, Pennsylvania. Neighbors jointly own the land but individually own their homes. Bryn Gweled will also host a public seminar on community on October 20. Visit the website at www.bryngweled.org. Tel: (267) 880-0637.

From **Alternative High School Seeking Space for Classes**, By Ted Cohen, *Portland Press Herald*, August 18, 2000: The state's newest private high school is scheduled to open in three weeks. The question is: Where? The school's plans to rent a former bank office

on Main Street fell through this week, but organizers insist they will open even if they don't actually have a building to call their own. They are searching for space to lease and have a couple of possibilities. "If we have to, we can start in our homes," said Marylyn Wentworth, the school's principal and a key organizer of the project. **The New School** will be an outgrowth of **The School Around Us**, an elementary school Wentworth started more than 30 years ago in Arundel. Supporters say the school will provide a local alternative to public education. "We have 15 kids so far and we are planning to have 30 by the time we open Sept. 7," Wentworth said. "Alternative schools like the New School often have trouble finding space," says Jerry Mintz, director of the Roslyn Heights, NY-based Alternative Education Resource Organization. "Many such schools prefer to be located in urban settings. People are afraid that the students will drive people away from the downtowns, but in fact that is not the case. These kinds of schools are non-authoritarian, and the kids who go to them learn that respect is of the utmost importance," he said. Wentworth and her husband began the School Around Us in 1968.

I've been following your messages to Dick Jones and I've written to let him know that we are working on a proposal for the **Phoenix Centre** here in Britain. We shall be launching an appeal for funds in October. It's main aim will be to carry out active research, analyze and evaluate practice, provide training, promote, campaign, disseminate information and raise the profile of Responsive/Progressive/Democratic/Alternative Education (haven't decided on the label yet). Links with the International Association of Learning Alternatives will be invaluable. Lynette Gribble

The Paths of Learning Resource Center has now indexed over 400 resources from publishers in education about schools and alternative education programs based on holistic and learner-centered philosophies in education (Waldorf, democratic, homeschooling, at-risk, etc.), which they invite K-12 educators, teacher educators, and home educators to explore. In addition, they have just added a new "browsing" feature, which they would like you to try out. It allows you to browse all of the resources that they have reviewed by author, publishing web site, or producer. Then, you can browse more deeply for related resources by clicking on categories that match your needs or interests in holistic/humanistic education. In addition, they are looking for specific feedback about this new Resource Center. Web: <http://www.PathsOfLearning.net/index2.cfm>. Tel: 1-800-639-4122. Robin Ann Martin, Coordinator. Email: robin@PathsOfLearning.net.

From the Editorial Comment On Research, High-Stakes Testing, and Core Philosophy by Gordon F. Vars, *The Core Teacher*, Summer 2000: "Person-centered, democratic, progressive education is under siege today, as state legislatures continue to impose unreasonable uniform requirements on all students, in flagrant disregard of individual differences. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to remind ourselves of what schools in a democracy are really for...Noted educational researcher Michael Scriven put it this way 33 years ago: 'Testing for the extent of learning of certain rather delicate and pervasive concepts may be itself destructive, in that it makes the student too self-conscious about the role of the concept at too early a stage, thereby preventing its natural and proper development.' This is not to mention the perfectly understandable paranoia of teachers, administrators, and boards of education that are being judged by student scores on grossly-flawed tests!" The publication is available from NACC, 1640 Franklin Ave, Suite 104, Kent, OH 44140-4324.

The March 2000 issue of *The Sudbury Valley School Journal* included an article by editor Mimsy Sadofsky titled **Culture Clashes**. In it she related how the school dealt with the problem of two girls, ages 7 and 4, leaving the school grounds and walking to a nearby park and back. Disgruntled neighbors of the school complained and reported the incident to the Department of Social Services, which subsequently came out to investigate the matter. Mimsy describes how the school's Judicial Committee and School Meetings handled the crisis, including changing the rules and how they go about their daily business to include checking on everyone. Before this incident, "No one thinks of us in the normal course of the day as checking on anyone, when in reality we are checking on everything," she says, "But to be doing it on a list, to check off each name of a kid under eight years old, seemed like an imposition." SVS Press, 2 Winch St., Framingham, MA 01701.

From What Ever Happened to Learning? by Linda Darling-Hammond, *Newsday*, June 16, 2000: "The Regents: To Test or not to Test": The tests are inadequate measures of high-quality learning and may undermine good work in classrooms. The high stakes applied to the tests create incentives for pushing low-scoring students out of school. Many teachers lack training to allow them to teach to the exams. School resources are so unequal that many students do not have access to the qualified teachers, texts, labs, computers and other materials they need to meet the standards. The system feels like one big 'gotcha' that sets up failure. The new exams are mostly more of the same, except that will be used to determine graduation for all the state's students, rather than the 30%

who graduated with Regents diplomas in the past. Prestigious private and suburban schools that never gave Regents exams because they believed they could offer a higher-quality curriculum without it are lobbying to be exempted. Schools that have operated more intellectually ambitious assessment systems on state waivers have been told their waivers will be revoked. Many believe they will be less successful if their students have to cram for multiple-choice tests. Even more dangerous are the stakes attached to the new tests. In addition to graduation from high school – an enormous stake when non-graduates have a one in four chance of finding a job – the tests are used to rank schools. Students will have to pass five examinations to graduate, with course work counted not at all. Yet the tests predict little about students' success in non-school situations. Pilot studies suggest that half of the students could fail to graduate. New York already has one of the nation's lowest 4-year graduation rates, at just over 60%. Holding schools accountable for average test scores rather than measuring the cumulative gains of individual students will exacerbate the problem. Studies show that this approach has led schools to hold low-scoring students back, assign them to special education, or push them out entirely. Getting rid of the bottom of the distribution makes the average scores look better. Inviting students to leave school in an economy in which dropouts can neither find jobs nor join the military tragically wastes their lives and taxes the society in increased welfare and prison costs. School reform in New York is now a charade. We need to realize that testing students is not the same as teaching them. *The author was Chair of the New York State Curriculum and Assessment Council. She is currently professor of education at Stanford.*

The National Youth Employment Coalition is a network of over 150 youth employment/development organizations dedicated to promoting policies and programs which help succeed in becoming lifelong learners. In carrying out this mission NYEC develops and improves the capacity and effectiveness of youth serving organizations, participates in the development of public policy through research, information and advocacy and setting standards to improve practice and services. All of this results in youth who are excited about the future. Contact: 1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Tel: (202) 659-1064. Fax: (202) 659-0399. E-mail: nyec@nyec.org

The National Academy of Alternative Education at Fordham University is offering two courses together this fall: Fundamentals of Education Administration and Managing the Teaching Learning Process. Administrative Internships are available for eligible students. For more information contact Anita Batisti at (212) 317-2775.

The Gesundheit! Institute reports that since the “Patch Adams” movie was released, they have gained a great deal of attention and have received several offers of donations which will allow them to build their hospital. They have established the Gesundheit Hospital Foundation and are waiting for the funding to arrive. Meanwhile, they continue their Housecall Program in which you can get involved in your own community. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.patchadams.org>.

In an era of increasing strains on the nation's education system, the community schools movement is injecting new life into public school buildings in hundreds of cities and towns throughout the US. Nine examples are profiled in **Community Schools: Partnerships for Excellence**, a new publication from the Coalition for Community Schools. For copies of this publication or for more information about community schools, contact the Coalition at 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036. Tel: (202) 822-8405x45. Email: ccs@iel.org. Web: www.communityschools.org.

From School Testing: An Education-Industrial Complex Is Emerging By David Bacon, *Oakland Tribune*, April 16, 2000: This is the year U.S. schools went test-crazy. By January every state but one had adopted standards for public school students in at least one subject and 41 states had adopted tests to measure student performance. Promotion from one grade to another, and high school graduation itself, are now often test-determined. Test scores increasingly determine the ranking of schools, the resources available to them, and even control of the local curriculum. Meanwhile, politicians vie with each other to position themselves as pro-education. This almost obsessive interest in testing is driven by factors ranging from political ambition to a genuine desire for public schools that teach their students. But a big push comes from a much less publicized source — the testing companies themselves. Dominating the field are three big publishers — McGraw-Hill, Harcourt and Houghton-Mifflin. But what do the tests actually measure? And even more important, do standardized tests really improve the quality of education? An exhaustive study by Youngstown State University Professor Randy Hoover found that the poorer the family, the lower the score was likely to be. Schools in affluent neighborhoods do predictably well, and schools in poor, minority neighborhoods don't. But ranking schools isn't necessarily going to lead to reallocating resources. In many states, school districts that rank low on tests may lose funding, and see students and resources diverted to charter schools. Beginning in 1985, Harcourt helped develop the Texas Academic Assessment Skills test.

Being the test developer can be very advantageous – not only is test grading subcontracted to Harcourt, but the company marketed its textbooks to local districts as published by “the same company that helps to write the TAAS tests.” Consumed by testing fever, Texas districts and schools organize TAAS camps, hold TAAS Olympics, and bend the curriculum towards test taking. Penalties for low performance can be brutal and allegations of test tampering have sparked investigations, led to the firings of teachers, and even the indictment of a school board. Parents, especially in African-American and Latino communities, are rebelling. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund challenged the TAAS test, saying it discriminates against black and Hispanic children. In Cleveland, the NAACP charged the Ohio test with racial bias after not one student in five poor schools passed all sections. With personnel moving back and forth between the state and private sector, an education-industrial complex is emerging. “It’s not a conspiracy,” O’Brien says. “Corporations like IBM, Proctor and Gamble and Eastman Kodak want schools to educate students to their specifications. They want education centered on testing, and curriculum aligned to the tests.” —David Bacon writes for Pacific News Service.

Responses to questions about possibly starting an LA-area Sudbury school by **Stuart Williams-Ley**, staff member at **Cedarwood Sudbury School** in Santa Clara, CA.: *How do you find like-minded individuals efficiently, without spending a ton of money on outreach?* Six years ago I faced the same problem. I wrote a four-page summary of what I wanted to do and sent copies to everyone I knew. I also put extremely inexpensive ads in a couple of newsletters. I subsequently sent everyone on my list homemade postcards announcing two informational meetings. Those attracted 20-25 people each. From among those we attracted only four founders, including myself, but it was enough to begin the startup process.

Is this viable in an urban/suburban setting? In LA County, land is quite expensive, and probably impossible to obtain unless donated. Would rental of a large house do? Real estate would indeed be a major hurdle for you. If you rent a house, a major concern is the Americans with Disabilities Act. This law would require major renovations of most older houses. Two story houses would require elevators and sprinklers.

In the same vein, I would worry about the ramifications in an urban environment of allowing four-year-olds to roam at will. What strategies do you use? Our School Meeting passed rules limiting “roaming at will” to people who are at least seven years old.

Finally, having taught in the public schools for years,

I’ve always thought (a la John Gatto) that I was putting on a show, with too little involvement from the kids. And I could see the dangers of forcing new concepts on kids who weren’t ready. So my question is, how much would I have to submerge myself, or would I? This is a question you’ll have to answer for yourself. Read a book or two, or more; listen to some audiotapes. You might also want to visit our school sometime to see what it’s like. It’s a big leap of faith to trust children to make their own decisions. They will not share all your concerns, though they will be interested in getting to know you as a person.

Naropa University is beginning a new Master’s in Contemplative Education in summer, 2001. For More info, Lisa Trank, Director of Communications, 303 546-3567.

Learning Opportunities About Sustainability, Community

Young people seeking hands-on learning opportunities about sustainable lifestyles, permaculture design, self-reliant homesteading, ecovillages, or intentional communities might want to check out the Fall '00 issue of *Communities Magazine*. With a theme, “Let’s Go! Learning Opportunities About Community,” the Fall issue profiles intentional communities and aspiring ecovillages that host students, interns, apprentices and in subjects from organic growing to natural building, consensus and cooperative governance to permaculture design. It includes a directory of communities and ecovillages that host these programs with contact information. The magazine also profiles colleges that offer courses that study or visit intentional communities and ecovillages, and offers a list and contact information on these also. *Communities magazine*, Fall '00 issue, \$7 postpaid. Multiple copy discounts available for alternative schools and others. *Communities magazine*, 800-995-8342, www.ic.org. FIC, Rt. 1, Box 156, Rutledge, MO 63663. Diana Christian, Editor, *Communities Magazine* 290 McEntire Road, Tryon, NC 28782 828-863-4425 <communities@ic.org> or <diana@ic.org>

Home Education News

The following excerpts of an article by Rick Karlin appeared in the Albany Times Union on July 19, 2000: A Berne couple who faced child abuse charges when they tried to take their 7-year-old son off Ritalin must continue giving him (it), a family court judge has ruled. Those civil charges led to the recent court hearing and raised the possibility, though remote, that social workers could remove the boy from his home. The judge also ruled that the Carrolls may seek a second opinion on whether Ritalin should be given. The Carrolls' pediatrician and a psychologist both agreed the Ritalin should continue, Carroll said. "But if another pediatrician examines Kyle and disagrees, the Carrolls could then appeal the decision." Sent to us by Bill Elliot who adds: "I hope someone can pass along the name of an anti-Ritalin pediatrician to us to forward to them. The importance to homeschoolers is that IEPs could become a double-edged sword for those who have never public schooled, as well as a block to those parents seeking to get out of the public system and possibly into homeschool sanctity." Email: reason_3@hotmail.com

From Learning at Home, Students Take the Lead, by Peter T. Kilborn, The New York Times, May 24, 2000: In Maryland, the State Department of Education said that in the 1990's the number of public school students rose 19 percent, to 850,000, while those registered at homeschools jumped to 15,651 from 2,296. Education experts attribute most of the growth to unschooling, the antithesis of the religion-based image of homeschooling, which follows school-like schedules and relies on curriculums and textbooks. Unschooling ... where parents respond to a child's talents and interests in guiding their learning rather than imposing a conventional curriculum. Like charter schools, magnet schools, private schools and parochial schools, homeschooling responds to disenchantment with conventional public schools. Critics fault homeschooling for isolating children. They say it discourages social interaction and development of the skills of teamwork and collaboration. The National Education Association, the largest teachers union, has adopted a resolution saying that homeschools cannot provide a comprehensive education and urging that only licensed teachers be permitted to run homeschools. Unschooling parents say they believe that by homing in on their children's natural talents and curiosity, with texts and curriculums that best capture their impulse to learn, they can guide them into the three R's when the children are most ready, not when professional educators say they ought to be. While homeschooled stu-

dents do not get conventional diplomas, studies of their performance show that they score at least as well as conventionally taught students on tests like the College Boards and gain admission to the most elite universities. Without grades or class rankings to guide them, colleges put greater emphasis on essays, College Boards, advance placement courses that students take in community colleges, and the recommendations of unrelated adults. Lynn Linde, chief of the student services and alternative programs at the Maryland Department of Education, said: "When they go to college, they seem to be doing well. We haven't done actual research, but the gist of the anecdotes has been, 'These kids are fine; they're bright kids.'

From Homeschoolers No. 1 on College Entrance Test by Andrea Billups,

The Washington Times, August 22, 2000: Homeschooled students have scored higher than their traditionally educated peers on the ACT, one of the nation's two major college-entrance exams, for the third consecutive year. While the average ACT assessment score was 21 nationally, home-educated students scored an average of 22.8 - yet another academic benchmark that has given the movement increasing credibility and attention. "Parents are doing a great job of educating their own children," said J. Michael Smith, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association in Purcellville, Va. "This explains why many highly selective colleges are recruiting their complement of homeschoolers." Mr. Smith called 2000 a "banner year" for homeschoolers, citing their first-, second- and third-place finishes in the Scripps-Howard National Spelling Bee and their second-place finish in the National Geography Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. The number of homeschoolers taking the ACT this year, 4,593, represents a 41 percent increase over last year, ACT officials said. Across the nation, a record 1,065,138 high school students took the 2000 ACT exam, which includes curriculum-based achievement tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. The tests measure achievement, as well as preparation and readiness for college course work. The scale for scores is 1 to 36. Traditionally schooled students scored 21 in 1998 and 1999. In those two years, homeschooled students scored 22.8 and 22.7. The ACT, much like the more popular SAT test, the other major college-entrance exam, is used not only for admissions, but for making decisions on scholarships and course placements. ACT officials said this year's results showed that students

were taking more rigorous course work in preparation for college. “A spokeswoman from the College Board, which administers the SAT, said a question on homeschooling was recently added to the student information section of the exam.

The *Home Educator's Family Times* August issue included **53 Reasons to Homeschool**, an online survey conducted by Pam Sorooshian for the National Home Education Network. Among those reasons are: Spend more time together as a family; Allow children time to learn subjects not usually taught in their school; Encourage concentration and focus – which are discouraged in crowded classrooms with too many distractions; Learning can be more efficient since methods can be used that suit a child's particular learning style; Children will be more confident since they are not subject to constant fear of criticism from teachers; Grading is usually unnecessary and learning is seen as motivating in and of itself; Children do not have to wait until they are grown to begin to seriously explore their passions, they can start living now; Low standards or expectations of school personnel will not influence or limit children's ability to learn and excel. PO Box 708, 51 West Gray Rd., Gray, ME 04039. Web: www.homeeducator.com.

Homeschoolers David and Laurie Callihan have written **The Guidance Manual for the Christian Home School: A Parent's Guide to Preparing Home School Students for College or Career** to help parents successfully mentor their children. This guide is the homeschool equivalent of the traditional school's guidance counselor – it covers practical issues such as testing, socialization, extracurricular activities, curriculum, scholarship, career planning, special needs, and more. Although written from a Christian perspective, the manual contains information that can benefit all homeschooling families. It is available from Career Press, 3 Tice Rd., PO Box 687, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417. Tel: (201) 848-0310 x 524.

The **Unofficial Guide to Homeschooling: A New Voice in Business & Lifestyle Learning** by Kathy Ishizuka provides practical, comprehensive information on all aspects of homeschooling. With a review panel of experts in the field, she covers an array of alternatives for every age level and subject of study. The guide includes charts, checklists, timesaver and money-saver tips, a glossary, samples of key documents, professional and personal tips, and a directory of organizations and web sites. It is available from IDG Books, 909 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. Web: www.idgbooks.com.

From **Earl Stevens** on <http://www.unschooling.com>: One morning last fall Jamie walked over to the radio station at the University of Southern Maine to see if he could “get a job” there. He wanted to learn what he could about radio broadcasting, inspired in part by listening to Garrison Keillor's Saturday night PBS show, the American Radio Company. After wandering around the station for an hour shaking hands and talking to everybody, he telephoned to tell me that he would be staying for a little while longer. Several hours later, after a few more check-in calls, Jamie was ready to come home. When I drove over to the station to pick him up, the station manager approached me and said, “It is unusual for us to have a kid just walk in off the street and ask to help. Jamie has energized us today, and we think he will be a great addition to our staff.” I smiled and nodded, trying to imagine Jamie energizing the radio station and being on the staff. Soon Jamie was hosting the Saturday morning children's radio show, “Chickens Are People Too,” attending staff meetings, taping promotional pieces and general announcements, and lending a hand at the station with whatever work needed to be done. If we leave our radio tuned to WMPG, we never know when we might hear him cracking a joke, making an announcement, or talking on the air with whomever happens to be hosting one of WMPG's broadcasts. Even when he is with us at home, his voice is busily traveling the airwaves. Jamie Stevens, radio personality. I'm glad Jamie didn't ask me for my opinion before going to the radio station. I might have said, “Oh, I don't know. Maybe you need to be a little older. Maybe it would be best to wait a while.” Perhaps I would not have said this, but I am capable of it. There is a part of me that is still the isolated 11-year old of long ago who is intimidated by so much boldness on the part of this new 11-year old. I can still find reasons for Jamie not to do things, to wait until he's older, more mature, more ready. Most of the time they are not good reasons and they fall apart under close scrutiny. Jamie knows I have this tendency, and he manages to work around it.

Public Alternatives

Charter School News

From **Homeschoolers Regional Center Proposed** by Judy Bernstein, *Post Star*, Glens Falls, NY: The city is being eyed as the site of a regional center for a new kind of charter school that will serve home-schooled special education students. If approved, the school would be the first of its kind in the state. A proposal for the school is expected to be made to the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute in August. Bill VanAllen of Kingston, the school's proponent, said the point of the new school would be to improve the education of special education students in kindergarten through high school, targeting those who are now home-schooled as well as others now enrolled in public schools. The school is looking to help students with disabilities such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional problems and those simply having trouble with traditional schools, he said. "It provides an alternative. (With public schools), I think you have a basic institutional model, a factory school. This would allow the freedom to escape that factory." Under the plan, students would attend regional centers, where teachers, counselors, computers and libraries would be located. Students would do at least some of their other work online. Sports would be sub-contracted to providers such as the YMCA. Kingston and Point Jervis are also being considered for regional centers. VanAllen is ultimately looking to get all towns in the state to start up individual charter schools that would be part of the network. According to The Center for Education Reform, two other states, California and Alaska, have charter schools for home-schooled youngsters. The non-classroom programs make up one-third of California's charter schools. The center said the number of charter schools nationally has grown rapidly in the past two years, up from 484 in 1998 to nearly 1,700 today. There were five operating in New York as of April.

From **As Charter School Closes, Debate on Innovation's Limits**, By Kate Zernike, Egg Harbor Township, N.J., May 2: When they opened a charter school in a deserted warehouse here, **Michael**

and Sarah Rennick had a clear vision of what it could be: a place where kids who did not fit the mold would flourish, a place where students might start their days later to accommodate their teenage sleepiness, a place where they would call teachers by their first names, and skateboard or play paintball in lieu of gym class. **The Regional Experiential Academic Charter High School**, also known as **Reach**, would engage these students like no other school had, giving them trust and responsibility and getting hard work and respect in return. But where the Rennicks saw potential, the state of New Jersey saw chaos. Given the freedom to learn the way they wanted, students were not learning anything at all, the state found. That was presuming students actually showed up at school, and many simply did not. The school so threatened the students' education, officials said, that they shut it down barely eight months after it opened. The closing last month left the Rennicks and parents complaining the state stifled its own experiment. The state set up the charter school law to reward innovation, but then refused to allow it, parents say. What looked disorganized was just different, and given time, they insist, the children and the school would have blossomed. "We saw the opportunity for true innovative reform," said Mr. Rennick. "They didn't want to hear about real reform." The closing highlights an essential tension in the charter school movement. By definition, charter schools are alternative public schools, so they are often started by and attract parents who feel the traditional public school model is not working for their children. Many are based on unconventional ideas of how children learn best. Parents describe a school that transformed monosyllabic, withdrawn teenagers into chatty students who looked forward to going to school. Parents insist the school should have been allowed to stay open at least until the first round of statewide tests, to give it a chance to prove whose version of the school was more accurate — the state's or the founders'. But with the disputes with the state escalating, the school's board of trustees voted out the Rennicks in February.

From **Charter Schools in Action: Renewing Public Education** by Chester E. Finn, Jr., edited transcript of speech, *Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research Dialogue*, May 2000: The best definition for a charter school is that it is an independent public school of choice, which not so many years ago we would have thought was an oxymoron. But such schools are alive and kicking and indeed proliferating around the US. There are currently almost 1,700 of them in over 31 states, enrolling about 300,000 students. We have added over 400 schools in just the past 12 months. Thirty-seven states have authorizing legislation, but these laws vary greatly. Currently, 60% of all charter schools are in five states: Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, and Texas. Most charter schools are little, with the median enrollment being 137 students. Charter schools have a very similar demographic profile to the regular public schools, and many have found themselves inundated not with the best and the brightest, but with the most troubled kids in their community. This stands to reason. Who is going to send their kids to a school with no track record that's operating in a warehouse? In most cases, the people sending their kids to charter schools could be described as close to desperate for finding a better option for their kids. Client satisfaction is very high and demand is very strong. There are waiting lists at about three-quarters of charter schools. Parents like charter schools; kids like them; teachers like them. 85 Devonshire St., 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109

Other Public Alternatives

Recent legislation has been enacted that requires every school district in Oklahoma to provide access to alternative education to students needing it. We are contracted by the State Legislature to assist and independently evaluate all alternative education programs throughout Oklahoma, of which there are about 500. Alternative education receives the 4th largest allocation, including special ed & other federal programs; therefore, the elected officials and the State Department of Education wants documented justification for these expenditures. Additionally, my office provides professional in-services and workshops to teachers, parents, and students statewide on over 40 topics. We also provide

psychometric testing and prescriptive instruction to area school districts. We have been in existence since the early 1970's. We are part of the **Cushing Public School System** (i.e., we are not for-profit "consultants"). I have been a public educator all my life, particularly secondary language arts. I also have adapted curricula for the area vocational-technical schools and was a job developer/counselor & employability skills instructor for Job Corps. Robert Basinger, 123 E. Broadway, Cushing, OK 74023. Email: botac@galstar.com. Tel: (918) 225-4838. Web: www.csdcotac.org.

I am the lead person at a small, public, alternative high school in St. Paul, MN that has an arts focus. We have about 100 students who come to us from all over the metro area, suburbs and even from Wisconsin. I am also on the board for **STARS**, which is an off-shoot of MAAP. This organization focuses on direct involvement with students. STARS organizes and runs Legislative Day when students from alternative programs from all over the state meet at the capital and meet with their representatives and senators in groups and one-to-one. Incidentally, there are 112,000 students in alternative education in Minnesota. In the spring we have a two-day MAAP STARS conference in St. Cloud. Each year more students attend — this year there were over 350. Some events are competitive, like Lifesmarts, which is run like a game show with three teams of students each round. The questions are all regarding consumer information. There are also non-competitive events like art display, project demonstration and performances. Students and teachers work together in STARS to keep making it better each year. **Wendy Lacska, Creative Arts School**, lacska@isd.net.

From **Puerto Rico Closes the Gap**, by **Marjorie Coeyman**, *The Christian Science Monitor*: In 1992, Puerto Rico launched an initiative in its public schools aiming to close a 70-point gap between public school students and their private-school counterparts on standardized tests. Six years later, children who had attended reform classes every year outscored private-school students by 58 points in math reasoning and 79 points in math achievement on College Entrance Exam Board tests. And though reform focused only on math and science, students inched 10 points above private-school children in

verbal reasoning. Educators involved in the project pointed to better teaching training, methods similar to those of Japanese that focus on teamwork and problem solving, and a systematic approach that unified management with teachers. The program closely links science and math instruction. It simplifies the curriculum in both disciplines. There's a practical, hands-on approach, with a focus on the visual. Such a method requires a completely different approach from instructors, and that's why teacher training is at the heart of the reforms. The success of the initiative has not gone unnoticed by the education establishment. Department of Education Secretary **Richard Riley** has traveled to Puerto Rico to learn more about it, and US Congressman Jose Serrano has arranged a grant to bring Puerto Rican reform personnel to NY to set up programs in his mostly Hispanic district in the Bronx. Three Bronx middle schools are using the method, with nine more scheduled to join them.

From **Congress Asked to Rein in High-Stakes Tests**, *FairTest Examiner*, Spring 2000: Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and Rep. Robert Scott (D-VA) have filed legislation in the Senate (S2348) and House HR4333) that would bar states and districts which receive federal education aid from using test scores as a 'sole determinant' in making decisions about 'the retention, graduation, tracking, or within-class ability grouping of an individual student.' The legislation also establishes requirements tests must meet if they are used in the decision-making process. While the proposed legislation is given little chance of passage in this Congress, it has helped to attract attention to the issue of high stakes testing.

From **Test Opposition Heats up in Massachusetts**, *FairTest Examiner*, Spring 2000: In a testing season marked by dramatic walk-outs, rallies, vigils, and teach-ins, more than 300 students boycotted the high-stakes Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in April and May. Hundreds of students and parents attended an after-school rally on May 15 to express their opposition to the 18-hour test which is given to students in 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. The boycott and rallies represent just the tip of the iceberg of growing opposition to the test. During the test-taking time, boycotters engaged in a range of alternative academic projects: writing essays explaining why

they were not taking the test, participating in workshops about authentic and fair assessment systems, developing portfolios, and performing community service. **FairTest**, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139-1802

The staff members at **Vincent C. Scavo High School** in Des Moines, IA, created a study called **Best Practices in Alternative Education**. It is a survey of alternative programs in IA covering a wide range of topics, including participants' opinions about them. These include such things as program size, facility type, student/staff ratio, length of day, class size, dress code, parent communications, etc. Lots of graphs. 1800 Grand Ave, des Moines, IA 50309. Ph: 515 242-7589.

*Long awaited gatto book
now available!*

*The Underground History of
American Education*

*A Schoolteacher's Intimate Investigation into the Problem of Modern Schooling (412 pages)
By John Taylor Gatto*

For those who have followed the history of the creation of this book, its publication is a significant event. When a major publisher insisted he remove 30 pages he considered crucial, instead he returned their large advance, and ultimately arranged for the publication by himself.

What incendiary ideas could have led to such a sequence? Gatto's thesis is that the American public school system is efficiently doing what it was intended to do: Creating a docile, trained, consumer-oriented population which will not question the control of the country by big business interests. He backs this up by quoting the founders of this system, who actually articulated these goals, and in the process, knocks down icon after icon. You had better read this book. You may argue with it, not agree with some of it. But you should certainly be aware of what John has unearthed. AERO was able to get some of the first printed, pre-publication additions. The cost is \$30, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage. JM

International News and Communications

ENGLAND

INSPECTION UPDATE FROM ZOE READHEAD OF SUMMERHILL

Just a note to share my good news.. Today we received a letter from the Department for Education and Employment saying that we have been removed from the TBW (To Be Watched) list and that there are no outstanding issues from the March 99 inspection and subsequent Notice of Complaint. I think this means we really have won! We will now be visited in spring 2002 with a full reported inspection in 2004. The next things pending are our official complaint to Ofsted which should be filed in a few days (they aren't going to like this. . .) and getting our official representative who can meet with their representative to thrash out any differences which we have over future inspections.



Breakdancing Class at Summerhill

The first **Alternatives in Education Fair** organized by Human Scale Education was held in London last September. Over 600 people attended the fair, as well as representatives from Small Schools and larger, more established schools. Home education was represented by three different organizations, reflecting the rapid growth of homeschooling in England. Human Scale Education produces a newsletter and can be contacted at 96 Carlingcott, Near Bath, BA2 8AW. Tel: 01275 332516.

On the second day of the **Hes Fes**, a homeschooling family drove me over to **Sands School** which was only an

hour's drive, and we had a great visit. Founders **David** and **Lynette Gribble** came over to greet us. Sands has almost doubled in population to 70 since I was there three years ago! JM



Staff meeting at Sands School



Sands Students

One of the people I met at **Hes Fes**, **Leslie Barstow**, has organized **The Otherwise Club**, a homeschool group of about 40 families that meets a couple of times a week in London. JM

ETHIOPIA

I am working intensively to make the Internet media as easy as possible for universities and academic institutions in less developed countries. To that end, I am creating the **Internet Library and Media Academy** so that they can see at first hand what is going on in other parts of our

continent and how others are trying to solve their problems and to face new challenges. To my understanding, it cannot be enough to help just the people who are suffering, but it is necessary to help also the intellectuals working against all the odds. I am trying to connect not only the universities and Libraries, but also the teachers, lecturers, Doctors and Professors in those less developed countries so that they can share their experiences and teaching methods and effectively help their students. I am trying day and night to achieve this goal. If I get a job or any means of income, this will facilitate my targets. Thank you for your attention. Dr. Dawit Berhanu, Mildestieg 28, 22307 Hamburg. E-Mail: gllbr@yahoo.de or fo3a504@uni-hamburg.de. Web: <http://www.fly.to/> Dawit.

GERMANY

In Germany, home schooling is virtually illegal. Homeschoolers must meet the same requirements as the public schools or accredited private schools, making it impossible for homeschoolers to operate. Both native German and American missionary homeschoolers are being prosecuted. A German homeschool legal defense association is in the process of being organized. The Harder family lives in the Bavarian region of Germany with their 11 children. Charges have been filed against Mr. Harder for homeschooling. In March 2000, the police broke into the Harder home through a living room window and ransacked their house. The police emptied out closets and drawers and overturned furniture. Two of the children hid on the roof and then jumped out a small window when they heard the police opening the attic door. Their terrified seven-year-old daughter was screaming so much that the police ended up leaving her alone, but the 11-year-old daughter was physically taken from Mr. and Mrs. Harder and escorted to school. For the next two weeks, the police came every day to take the Harder's daughter to public school. Mr. Harder will be facing imprisonment or a fine of \$250 per day per child. American homeschoolers can make a difference by writing to Ambassador Juergen Chrobog, German Embassy, 4645 Reservoir Rd., Washington, DC 20007-1998. Tel.: (202) 298-4000. Fax: (202) 298-4249.

INDIA

Amukta Mahapatra, amu_54@yahoo.com
I met Jerry at the IDEC conference in Japan this July. I am associated with organizations taking up issues of child workers in India. Being an educator I have been involved in planning and organizing education programs for working children so that they can continue with their education instead of dropping out. Would like to network, discuss...about these issues. In most of my work I have used the Montessori methodology as a framework since it takes into account the needs of the children at different

stages.

ISRAEL

Yaacov Hecht, after having started the Democratic School of Hadera, has now started nine other schools and is starting many others around Israel, which are democratic, and is working on democratizing the whole public school system with the Minister of Education. He is doing this through the new **Institute for Democratic Education**. However, while we were in Japan, the Minister of Education quit the Cabinet so we don't know what the future of that will be.

JAPAN

From **Truancy Reaches Record High**, *The Japan Times*, Aug. 5, 2000: More than 130,000 elementary and junior high school students were truant for 30 or more school days during the 1999-2000 academic year, according to an Education Ministry survey. A total of 130,208 students missed school without permission between April 1999 and March this year, up about 2,500, or 2 percent, from the previous academic year and the most since the statistics were first taken in the 1991-1992 year. The rate of increase in the number of absentees slowed significantly, however, from the more than 10 percent rises posted in the three consecutive years starting with the 1996-1997 year. The figures correspond to 2.45 percent of all junior high school students in Japan — one in every 41 — meaning roughly one student in each class refused to attend school. The figure for elementary school students was 0.35 percent, according to the survey. One of the reasons often cited is bullying by other students. Meanwhile, the number of people who neither landed full-time jobs nor continued their education after graduating from high school, junior college or university increased to about 295,000, due in part to the continuing economic recession. The employment rate of new university graduates dropped 4.3 percentage points to a record low 55.8 percent, with only 301,000 out of the 539,000 graduates taking full-time jobs and with many of the remaining students continuing on to graduate school. Between 30 percent and 40 percent of the combined 163,000 university and junior college graduates who neither landed full-time jobs nor continued on to graduate school went to vocational schools, indicating a growing number of youths are hoping to gain special qualifications to help in their search for work.

NEW ZEALAND

The **Tamoriki** School in New Zealand grew to 60 students. The parents thought that 60 was big enough and so they started a second school which now has 20 students.

NORWAY

The **Forsoksgymnaset** is a school that was founded in 1966 by three Oslo students who were dissatisfied with what they felt to be the authoritarian atmospheres of their own schools. They wrote an appeal to all Oslo gymnasium students and teachers for the creation of a new type of school where "... pupils and teachers would have equal rights and together decide the necessary rules of the school and judge when the rules are broken." They got official approval and the school opened in September 1967 with 140 students. Their numbers are now down to around 75, but the school has had an influence on the Norwegian upper secondary school system out of all proportion to its size and student numbers. This year, the Oslo county administration wanted to cut out the first of the three years at the school due to low numbers applying at the start of the year. The school said this would cripple recruitment into the upper two years and eventually bring about the closure of the school. The Oslo city council finally agreed to continue to fund the first year at FGO, which means that there need be no staff redundancies/cuts and that should be an end to the crisis – for the time being anyway.

SCOTLAND

We are a fairly militant bunch in Scotland and managed to muster considerable political support for changing the law on consent to home educate (different from England) during the passage of the new Scots Education Bill. Not quite enough to succeed this time, sadly, but we are working hard on the Executive and are asking home educators internationally to e-mail bomb the Scottish Education Minister, Sam Galbraith, on the day of the march (September 7) to show solidarity and support for home education generally and legislative change in particular.

Ed note: The Scottish home educators mounted a successful march on September 7th to protest the fact that they have to get permission to start home educating. Three Members of Parliament joined them, with a group of children out front, marching to a drumbeat of an eight year old home educated student. There was much media coverage

Alison Preuss, Email: bookcave@mistral.co.uk or events@schoolhouse.org.uk. Schoolhouse Home Education Association, Tel: 01382 646964. Web: www.schoolhouse.org.uk.

How AERO Has Helped People

From **Nikki Lardas**: How have you helped me? Let me count the ways. First, when I was trying to decide how to educate my child, you listened and gave me courage. Once I had a behavior problem, now I have a gifted unschooler. He has taught himself to design web sites, he actually does chores when I ask him to and chastises me - respectfully - if I fail to play enough Beethoven or purchase enough Shakespeare. Personally, I am still teaching in the public schools. There are nibbles from alternative schools, and I am pursuing them vigorously. If nothing else, I may have to stay in the public schools, but thanks to AERO, my son does not have to attend them. Rest assured, I tell parents in the public schools every chance I get to get their kids out - subversive to the end. My subscription to AERO helps me spread the word and keep the faith.

From Stork Family School Trustee Council Chairperson, **L. Stepanenko**: We deeply appreciate the invaluable help AERO and personally **Jerry Mintz** constantly give us. Jerry was able to feel the atmosphere of **Stork Family School** at its very beginning in 1990. He fully realized the importance of alternative schools for the changing society of former Soviet Union and since then has been helping us repeatedly and in many ways. Stork School got to be known in many countries largely owing to AERO. Jerry Mintz has persistently been publishing information about our school and its life in *AEROgramme* and *The Education Revolution*. He has persuaded a number of foundations to support us financially. Thanks to his help we were able to participate in the **International Democratic Education Conference** in Israel, and England and to host the 6th IDEC in 1998. This year we were able to attend the conference in Japan also due to Jerry. Thanks to *AEROgramme* and *The Education Revolution* we are always aware of what is happening in alternative education around the world. Thus AERO helped us to become a part of the world's democratic and alternative education movement. With Jerry's help our school became Associated UNESCO School. He encouraged us to start the Alternative Education Centre in our city in order to spread the ideas of alternative and democratic education in Ukraine. Stork Family School will always be grateful to Jerry Mintz and AERO for their great help to us which in some cases was essential for the very survival of the school.

From **Brian Morse**: I am extremely grateful for your service! After my job availability posting was in the latest **Education Revolution**, I received a call, an interview, and a job with the **Community Involved Charter School** in Lakewood, CO. It is looking like it will be a terrific opportunity for me, and I owe a large portion of that to your service. If AERO hadn't taken the time to give me a call and talk, I probably would not have gone ahead and gotten an ER subscription or a self-ad, or this job. So thanks!

Alumni Stories

The War Years at Summerhill

By Peter Kyng. (Australia)

I went to Summerhill in the autumn of 1939. (Neville Chamberlain declared war on Germany shortly after I arrived.) One of my first memories of the school is of trying on a gas mask during an air-raid practice. It was one of those floppy, long ones that made you look like a horse. That summer seemed long and warm and sunny, and I remember with pleasure going to the tuck shop and spending my few pennies on sticky sweets. I have a clear memory of Peter Russell (“Rusty”) chanting over and over, “Gloaty, gloat! Gloaty, gloat! I’ve got sixpence saved from Poc!” I wonder whether he remembers it. I still see and hear Rusty chanting away as we returned to the school from the tuck shop. I have not seen him since I left the school in late 1945.

My mother had been keen to send me to Summerhill for years. There were two obstacles: we had no money, and my father did not agree with Neill’s ideas. Early in 1939 I had come down with a serious blood disease, which followed on from a bad attack of chicken pox. The first signs were numerous nosebleeds. I would wake up with my head in a pool of blood. The diagnosis was that I had an illness involving a complete absence of platelets, which are cells involved in clotting. I was in hospital for several months and eventually discharged as incurable. There was talk of removing my spleen, but my father would not allow it. At this point my mother decided to send me to Summerhill

We took the train to Ipswich, where Neill met us. He drove us to Leiston in his old-fashioned car. The chassis was square-shaped, like the old hansom cabs. The trip seemed long, probably because Neill did not speak during the whole journey. At first, he was reluctant to take me because of the blood illness, but he relented when my mother burst into tears. Since we had no money, he also took me for a nominal fee - whatever my mother was able to afford (my father had by this time consented to my going to the school).

I particularly remember my first night at the school. I was upset at being left there, but the children in my room did their best to make me feel at home. I had not previously experienced kindness from other children, and this was a revelation to me. My mother had promised that she would take me home if I did not like the school, and she rang after a day or two to ask me how I felt. I decided to stay. I felt quite at home, and indeed Summerhill was virtually to be my home for most of the war years. (My father died in 1941, and my mother, a

musician, was conscripted into ESNA an organisation for entertaining the troops. She was away in various theatres of war for most of the duration, and I spent almost all my holidays either at Summerhill or alternating with the families of two of my friends, Toddy Harman and Michael Boulton.) After that first term at Summerhill, I was taken to be checked at the hospital, and, to the surprise of the doctors, there was no trace of my blood illness. I had a full count of platelets: an interesting demonstration of the fact that there is no division between the body and the ‘mind’.

In 1940, we moved to Ffestiniog. The move did not worry me since I had not been at Leiston long enough to become attached to the place. My first memory of Wales is of the harsh winters. I remember three feet of snow, and Ffestiniog being completely cut off by road or rail from the rest of the country. But that was all fun to us children, and the country itself was beautiful and fascinating. I became interested in biology, and North Wales was the ideal place to study it. There was a great variety of plant life because of the varied habitats in the area: mountains, fertile valleys, coastal regions, a river delta, and hilly terrain. Near the school was a magnificent chestnut wood - a great source of good food, and we often went gathering chestnuts, which we roasted on a fire. Many different types of trees grew in the area: copper beaches, firs, pines, birch, oak, horse chestnut, plane trees, elms. On the slopes of the mountains I found insectivorous plants, such as Sundew. Summerhill was blessed with a fine science teacher, Corkhill (“Corky” to us) and I spent many hours in the lab talking to him and messing about as I wished. That was the wonderful thing about freedom “from” compulsory lessons. It meant freedom to explore whatever interested you. Many other children, of course, spent hours in the art room, or the workshop.

Summerhill was a very creative place. Neill himself led the way in creativity. The highlight of every term was the end-of-term plays, mostly written by the pupils. Neill also wrote plays, and these were first-class, usually funny, but with serious themes as well. Those of us who liked acting always wanted to be in Neill’s play, and were disappointed if we were not chosen. But in such cases there was compensation to be gained by writing your own play, and there was a great deal of friendly rivalry to see

I have come to the conclusion that Neill’s ideas would work in any school, provided that self-government were genuine. I have often wondered how Summerhill might be adapted to the state school system. This is something which all believers in the school should think about.

who could write the best one. Some of these were really very good - almost of professional standard. Neill would also hold regular sessions of 'spontaneous acting' in the Lounge. He would announce a theme and then volunteers would act it out on the spot. He often used to read to us, usually his own stories, such as *The Last Man Alive*. I remember also the 'originality competitions' when the various contributions would be displayed in a wall newspaper.

Here I would like to diverge for a moment to talk about Neill's alleged 'anti-academic' attitude. We must distinguish between what Neill said, or wrote, and what came through to us children. There is no doubt that Neill was a great teacher - or perhaps educator is a better word. Neill's English classes, taught in a conventional manner, were well attended. He always maintained interest and enthusiasm in his classes, and we were left with a wish to write well and learn more. He also taught mathematics well. And, although Neill did not in any way convey disapproval of those of us who were not interested in learning, he certainly rejoiced in the accomplishments of pupils who did well in the world after leaving Summerhill (although this may well have had more to do with the fact that the success of these pupils provided an answer to the critics of the school). Also, many parents were distinguished in the academic or cultural world, and the school was a focus of interest for intellectuals and educationalists. There was, as a result, an atmosphere in which intellectual and artistic achievements were highly valued.

Did this create pressure to perform well academically? I don't think so. Neill's commitment to freedom from compulsory learning was complete and heartfelt, and I don't think any of us felt any pressure from the school itself to succeed in life in the conventional sense. However, the social background of most of us, together with the realisation, as we grew older, that qualifications were important in the outside world, did provide motivation for many of us to work at our matriculation subjects. Those who didn't would, in any case, have been unlikely to settle for boring, dead-end jobs, as Neill often claimed, correctly.

How did we view Neill? I have said that Neill did much to encourage creativity. However, he was never an intrusive, forceful, element in the school. For my first few years at Summerhill, I was not very aware of him, I chiefly remember him sitting quietly at the Meetings, puffing on his pipe. We used to talk about him in that affectionately critical way that one talks about one's parents. He was, I suppose, a father figure, but his presence was quiet: reassuring rather than dominating, and usually in the background. The general opinion was that he was awkward when dealing with the emotional problems of teenagers - something he would have

admitted, putting it down to his puritanical Scottish background. For the older kids at Summerhill, sex was indeed a problem. Neither Neill nor any of the staff made any attempt to interfere with our love affairs. Looking back on it, though, I think it would have been better if Neill had told us frankly that, as his ideas on the matter could not be practised at the school, we should wait until we left to have sexual relations.

Apart from questions of sex, though, Neill was never remote, always approachable, and our relations with him could best be described as easy-going and natural - as they were with most of the staff. We certainly never thought of him as a "Headmaster". The absence of any false respect for Neill can be illustrated by the attitude of the older pupils when he took up the ideas of Reich. Most of us thought these theories were pseudo-scientific nonsense, and that Neill should not be taken in by them. I well remember some of the older pupils bluntly taking him to task and roundly denouncing Reich's theories. I need hardly add that this did not bother him.

Neill instituted what he called "Private Lessons", or "PLs" at this time. As far as I remember, these were a kind of preventive psycho-therapy based on Reich. I had a few PLs, and they made little impression on me. I lay down on a couch, Neill asked a few questions, and prodded my stomach muscles to see whether they were rigid - rigid muscles being a sign of repression, according to Reich. The PLs lasted only a few minutes and seemed inconsequential. Their main value to me was that I got individual attention from Neill.

Some critics of Summerhill have argued that the school only worked because of Neill's personality. There is no doubt that any school run by Neill would have been exceptional, and a wonderful education for anyone. I have thought a lot about this since leaving the school, and I have come to the conclusion that Neill's ideas would work in any school, provided that self-government were genuine. I have often wondered how Summerhill might be adapted to the state school system. This is something which all believers in the school should think about. Many Summerhillians (including myself) have been unable to afford to send their children to the school.

Lewis-Wadhams Alumna in HAITI

Herb Snitzer, former Headmaster of Lewis-Wadhams School in upstate NY, informs us that one of his alumni, Michelle Karshan, one of the first students at LW is now the press secretary to the President of Haiti. They just got connected again by e mail after a thirty year gap! She is now a grandmother! Herb wonders whether a small "free school" might be established in Haiti with Michelle's help. Are there others out there who have alumni doing interesting jobs such as this?

Teachers, Jobs, and Internships

Schools Looking for Teachers and Interns

Hearthstone School, a Waldorf-inspired day school in Sperryville, Virginia for nursery through 12th grade, is acquiring a new building, expanding enrollment, and seeking three additional teachers for the 2000-2001 academic year. They expect to have 60 students enrolled and need a First/Second grade teacher, a Fourth/Fifth grade teacher, and a high school teacher with strengths in math and history. Waldorf training is preferred but not required. Mail resume to Jane Mullan, Director, Hearthstone School, P.O. Box 247, Sperryville, VA, 22740. Email: ajsilver@shentel.net. Tel: (540) 987-9212.

A dedicated, creative educator is wanted to help with development and to teach at alternative private school in New Jersey. The **DaVinci School** is being planned for opening in September 2001. Requirements include an energetic person with elementary level teaching or educational administration experience to serve on the Board of Directors. A teaching position at the school would be guaranteed when it opens. During the development period, duties would require minimal time commitment: advising on publicity and being present at meetings to introduce the school and recruit students. They anticipate starting with 10 children, ages 6 to 9, in one class. Send letter of interest and resume to Grayson Alexander, 12 Glenwood Rd., Fanwood, NJ 07023. Email: galex@ivillage.com

Cooperative Nursery School seeks dynamic, creative, certified Director / Teacher for this school year. Committed parents of 3, 4, & 5 year olds have cooperated at this lovely Mt. Airy, PA pre-school for over 30 years. Excellent salary, benefits and co-workers! Please fax resume and cover letter to (610) 667-5748 or e-mail to swfinney@com.

We are seeking math and science teachers for **School for the Physical City** in Manhattan. We are an expeditionary learning center (project based curriculum), part of District 2 (Board of Ed public school) with 300 students from grades 6-12. Our positions are in 8th grade math, 8th grade physical science and high school math. Please call me at work 212-683-7440 from 7:30 am to 4:00 PM and/or fax your resume to 212-683-7338. **Michael Soguero** Co-director, SPC

Teachers are needed for Kindergarten through grade 8 at **Well-spring**, a progressive urban school in Rhode Island. Interested individuals should call Maria at 401-941-4557.

From **Sweden**: a family is looking for a live-in teacher for their 16-year-old son, a bright, bi-lingual young man with

Downs' Syndrome, who has completed his compulsory education this year at the end of ninth grade. They would like further education for him, but are not satisfied with the options available in their area. This might be a very interesting opportunity for someone who has training with special needs children and who would enjoy country living at its most basic. English and Swedish are spoken. The boy's father, **Boudewijn Wegerif** can be emailed at bw@jak.se.

Joy Mountain Community Preschool is looking for a teacher for their alternative preschool in Portland, OR starting August 2000. This is a brand new school emphasizing respectful communication and conflict resolution skills as well as experiential learning. Ages 2-5 years. Modeled after Play Mountain Place in Los Angeles. Contact Emily Troper at (503) 335-0628. 2317 NE 33rd Avenue Portland, OR 97212. Email: MTroper@sprintmail.com

Looking for two high school teachers for **The New School**, an independent, community immersed, high school in Kennebunk, Maine, certified or certifiable in Math and Social Studies/English. Holistic, experiential, based on active citizenship, sustainability, thinking in visionary ways as well as being firmly in one's home place. Students can do coursework, apprenticeships, independent studies, be involved in community learning opportunities that already exist - any learning counts. The school will be democratically run by teachers, students and community mentors. For more info e-mail Marylyn Wentworth at marylynw@gwi.net or call (207) 967-2863. 259 Log Cabin Rd., Arundel, ME 04046.

The Waldorf School of Pittsburgh is seeking teachers for First and Third Grade. They are a developing school moving into their eighth year, and a member of AWSNA. Benefit package includes family health insurance, 100% tuition remission for faculty children, assistance with moving expenses, optional after-school childcare. They also have a mentorship program to help and support and train teachers. Interested individuals email waldpitt@aol.com or call (412) 431 1577.

Certified instructors are needed for **Western Wyoming High School** in Jackson, WY. This is a small alternative high school with many "at risk" students. Experience in alternative/charter schools would be great. For more specific information, contact Terry Roice, Principal, or Kathy Taylor, Secretary, before submitting an application with TCSD#1. Tel: (307) 733-9116. Email Kathy: ktaylor@teton1.k12.wy.us or Terry: troice@teton1.k12.wy.us.

Always wanted to teach, but not in a traditional setting? Free public progressive charter school needs teachers for new campuses. K-8 extending one grade per year through 12th. \$20-23K, great benefits, southern lower cost of living. Ranch science and marine science campuses in central Florida. Send resume and personal statement of educational philosophy in your choice of formats. Minimum of bachelor's degree, prefer additional languages & international experience. Must love

children and to organize chaos, be a team member. Approved K-12, we are currently serving K-8, with the high school program beginning next year. Mixed-age grouping, teacher as mentor, authentic assessment, non-coercive, process goals, student paced education, project oriented learning. **Renaissance School**, Lake Worth, FL Fax: (863) 701-1044 or email trs1@digital.net

The **Albany Free School**, an inner-city community-based school for kids 2-14, has an opening for a full-time intern. The school can provide housing and terms are negotiable. For more information contact Chris at: albanyfreeschool@yahoo.com or 518.434.3072

Teachers Looking For Schools

Sue Steele, a recent graduate from Penn State's Art Education program is seeking a job at an alternative school. She was a student teacher under the direction of Adrienne Hunter at Community School East in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania and Millvale Education Center in Millvale, Pennsylvania. She is currently a long-term substitute in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Please contact suesteele10@hotmail.com. 779 Old State Road Apollo, Pennsylvania 15613.

If you are searching for a person with a LIVING THROUGH LIVING PHILOSOPHY in the Chicago area, contact **Rhonda Goebel** at 708/386-0662. After years of studying and applying unschooling concepts in both my personal and professional life, I recently completed thesis research at a Sudbury model school. I am now open to considering career opportunities or teaming up in collaborative efforts toward extending free and democratic 'school' opportunities to young people in the Oak Park or Chicago area.

Conferences

September 21-22, Arlington, VA, **2nd Annual PEPNET Institute**, Doubletree Hotel. The PEPNET Institute will enable youth employment professionals from across the nation an opportunity to learn about the elements of effective practice. Contact: National Youth Employment Coalition, 202-659-1064.

October 1-4, **12th Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference**, Baltimore, MD, 864 656-2599, www.dropoutprevention.org

October 12-14, Greensboro, NC, **World 2000 Rediscovering Joy in an Age of Accountability**, Airport Marriott Hotel. Sponsored by The International Alliance for Invitational Education. Web: www.invitationaleducation.net. PO Box 26171, Greensboro, NC 27409. Tel: (336) 852-6450.

October 15-17, Las Vegas, NV, **Magnet Schools of America**, Writing the next Magnet Schools Assistance Program Grant Application, PO Box 6000490, North Miami Beach, FL 33160,

800 986-3223 ext 5084, www.magnet.edu

October 21-28, Soul in Education, an International education Conference, **Findhorn Foundation**, conference@findhorn.org, Ph: 44 1309 691933, Fax 44 1309 691833.

November 3-5, Claryville, NY, **Rekindling the Flame**, Frost Valley Camp. A retreat and conference for those involved in home education support and leadership - past, present and future - sponsored by the **Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (ALLPIE)**, PO Box 59, East Chatham, NY 12060. For a registration form contact: ALLPIE Conference, c/o Devorah Weinmann, 186 East Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520. Tel: (516) 868-5766. Email: Devww2@aol.com.

November 3 – 6, 2000, San Francisco, CA, **Montessori Peace Education 2000 Conference**, Ramada Plaza Hotel. Leaders in the Montessori community will explore the issues of helping to promote the growth of peaceful children, families, schools, and development of a grassroots Montessori movement united together around the world. Call (301)840-9231 or 800-655-5843 for more information.

December 7-9, Washington, DC, **National Charter Schools Conference**, Omni Shoreham Hotel. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with The National Conference Logistics Center (NCLC). They are now calling for presentations; those interested, please submit a proposal to participate as a presenter. Tel: 1-800-203-5494. Web: <http://www.conferencepros.com>.

December 7-9, **The 2000 National Charter Schools Conference**, Washington, D.C., 800 203-5489, www.conferencepros.com

December 13-17, **First International Student Representative Conference**, Topics include: Celebrating Cultural Heritage, Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century, The Environment: Preserving Our Future, SRC's Furnishing Their Home in the Global Village. Charles Kingston, 1 Gladstone St, Bathurst NSW Australia 2795, Ph: 02 63322603, Fax 02 63322302, ckingston@interact.net.au

January 11 – 13, 2001, Palm Springs, CA. **National Conference and Training Seminar on Educating Adjudicated, Incarcerated and At-Risk Youth**, Hyatt Regency Suites. An opportunity to support education as an intervention strategy, to identify unique components of working in institutional and alternative settings, and to establish and maintain bridges of understanding between related professions whose mission is to address the problem of high-risk students. For more information, call (909) 880-5977.

June 27-30, **30th Annual International Alternative Education Conference**, Inn of the 7th Mountain, Bend, Or. Bob Wiley 800 455 9252, or call the AERO office.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

Since 1973: The Journal of Alternative Education

IMPROMPTU DEMOCRACY

The Home Education Seaside Festival in Charmouth, England, June 14-21, 2000

by Jerry Mintz

The home education movement in England is just beginning to blossom. Whereas it is illegal in Germany, for example, there are now about 30,000 home educators in England. The main organization promoting home education in England has been Education Otherwise. The group which has set up the Hes Fes, a spin-off of EO, puts out a magazine called *Choice in Education*. This was the third conference they have put on, but the size has grown exponentially. There had never before been an even like this in England. Nine hundred homeschoolers came to this Festival, including 500 children from about 250 families! People also came from Finland, Italy, Germany, and Sweden.

During the 15 minute ride down to the ocean we went from sunshine to mist. The Hes Fes, was at a large campground a short walk from the ancient town of Charmouth, and a five minute walk to the sea. It covered several large, connected fields and had a central area with bathrooms, showers, and a small store. At the Festival site we saw a lot of tents being set up including a 120-foot one that was the main area for the presentations. There was also a tent that was feeding people vegan food. I met Andy Bluett who was organizing the conference. He's a young homeschooling father who was getting things done with a great deal of efficiency, but with a fairly relaxed attitude.

As I walked around I realized that this was an instant homeschool village, with its own neighborhoods, something which I had never seen before. Yes, I had seen homeschool conferences at hotels, but this was completely different and far more exciting and vibrant.

At the Hes Fes, I slept in half of a storage tent. Actually it was rainy, windy and cold for most of the week, but those homeschooling English didn't seem to notice! I guess it was normal for them. The food

was provided by a group which called itself The Anarchist Teapot. It was all vegan food and provided at cost by the group. In fact, the total price, including food and camping fees, was only 65 pounds for the week! I thought the food was fine, but there were some people walking to the village to eat or driving to a fast food "Little Chef" nearby.

During the week, while the adults were at their presentations, many kids were outside learning circus games: stilts, juggling, spinning things, and having a great time. A lot of the younger kids were going around trading Pokemon cards and there was a lot of discussion about that. Overall it was notable that there were very few problems between people and between kids. Everybody seemed to be getting along very well — so much for the question of homeschoolers lacking socialization!



Homes educated students in main tent



Children practice circus skills

I found Mike and Jan Fortune-Wood at whose home I had stayed when I was in England about 2 years ago. They're home schooling their four children. Jan made a presentation about an organization and a listserv that is called Taking Children Seriously. Her point was that we should not treat children as anything other than human beings who have the right to be treated with respect, and that means at all times.

To get ready for my own talk I set up chairs in several concentric circles. I told a few kids that we might be doing something with a democratic meeting and talking about things like Pokemon. Some said they would come to the meeting and help me out.

The kids and a few adults were in the center circle in a "fishbowl" in order to demonstrate the meeting process. Tamsen and Rowen Fortune-Wood, 12 and 13, were very helpful throughout all of the meetings. We immediately got into it by making an agenda. We put four things on it but we only got to two of them: one was Pokemon; the other was squirt guns. As one of the adults said to me later, he realized he was having a sort of surrealistic experience. He had spent the last hour and a half talking about Pokemon and squirt guns!

At its high point the chairs were completely filled and people were standing, so there were more than 250 people there. Somehow the word spread through the kid grapevine that something unusual was happening, and that we were discussing important subjects, and more and more children came in through-out the meeting, participating in the discussions.

I outlined to them the process of the meeting system: that we would first make an agenda, have discussion, make proposals, and if they were seconded, we would vote on them after more discussion. I explained that this system, which had evolved at my old school, Shaker Mountain, was based on what we had learned from the Iroquois Indians in which the minority was always respected. Therefore, after a vote was taken, the minority was polled and allowed to explain why they voted against the proposal. At that point anyone could call for more discussion with a revote. On the other hand, if nobody asked for a revote or made a better proposal, the proposal was carried.

Originally I was going to try to keep the meeting inside the fishbowl, but we took comments from other people sitting on the outside because everybody

wanted to participate. We allowed everyone to vote on the questions.

Of course, this was only supposed to be a DEMONSTRATION of the democratic meeting process, but as usually happens, the meeting took on a life of its own and became quite real after just a few minutes.

One of the first things that came out of the Pokemon discussion was that some people thought the older kids were taking advantage of the younger kids in their trades. One of the proposals that the kids made was that a group of more experienced children would act as arbiters or consultants to help kids who were making Pokemon trades, particularly the younger ones. This was passed. The people who were willing to do this would put on a little badge or sign.

One parent proposed that children under 8 not be allowed to make these trades without an arbiter. This was voted down by a lopsided margin. One of the points made was that kids need to learn by their own mistakes, and also that it was kind of an ageist idea. One young student said, "You may not like my trade. But if I like my trade, that's what's important to me." Children of all ages were participating in this discussion as well as adults. The marketing and exploitation of kids by Pokemon cards was also talked about. But one of the kids pointed out that it was an ideal mechanism for them to socialize and that they made many friends by approaching them if they had Pokemon cards. A lot of the statements made by various kids were greeted with applause.

The second item on the agenda had to do with use of squirt guns. After a long discussion, it was passed that squirt guns should only be used in one certain field. We then polled the minority as part of our process to find out why they voted the way they did. One person said she didn't like it because their tent was in that field!. It got quite a big laugh. Another mother said that she didn't want her young children going far away from where they were camped. And finally, someone pointed out that there was no tap to fill the squirt guns in that field! So, after that proposal had been passed, and after the minority was heard, a sizable majority reversed themselves and voted it down. This was a great lesson for people to demonstrate why it's important to honor the minority and listen to them, to try to come up with the best proposal. What did pass was that people could only squirt other people who had squirt guns. The kids were involved in the discussion right to the end and hardly any of them left the meeting. At one point I asked if they want to have another meeting, to which there was a loud chorus of yesses, with almost all hands raised.

After the meeting a couple of the kids came up to me who had items that they wanted to put on the agenda for future meetings. Everybody in the discussion said that they'd like to have more meetings like this. A number of people said they thought they could bring this back and use this process in their groups. It was clear that this was a very natural thing for these children, to participate in and be empowered by the meeting.

As I wandered around after that, some of the kids approached me and said they wanted to have another meeting. We set it for 5 PM.

Roland Meighan from *Education Now* made a presentation in the afternoon. The time for the meeting was approaching. I heard from some of the kids that the big issue was that one of the shopkeepers was not letting some of the kids come into the camp's sweet shop and telling other they had to stay outside while one or two of them came in. The reason, she said, was that there had been some shoplifting. Some of the older girls were outraged that they were being discriminated against in this way. So we put that on the agenda for the meeting.

There was no sign or announcement about the meeting. I wondered if there would be any people showing up. But the word just spread like wildfire. There were well over a hundred children and many adults. The kids were very articulate and outlined the fact that there had, indeed, been some shoplifting - that was established. But a lot of the kids were angry about the way they had been treated and one girl said she was forced to pay for something a second time that she had already bought because she had taken it back into the store with her.



Ben and Alfie were our representatives

On one side of the room a woman was sitting with her six-year-old son in her lap. Suddenly the six year old raised his hand to speak. His mother seemed shocked and later said, "I didn't know WHAT he was going to say." The boy's name was Alfie. He was really articulate about the situation as was Ben, his seven-year-old brother, right next to him. Alfie said, "I think that the woman in the store is under a lot of pressure. It is difficult to watch so many people. Maybe we should limit the number in the store to 5 or six. Since there has been some stealing, I think we should go to the shopkeeper and apologize to her." He then made it a proposal! It was discussed, voted on and passed. Alfie's mother later told me that she had asked him to go to "circus skills" at that time, but he told her, "No, I have to go to my meeting!"

Several proposals were made but not passed. One was made and then reversed. That proposal was that if you bought something from the store, you should not take it back in again. It seemed logical, but in the discussion after it was initially passed, one of the kids said, "Well if I want to go back into the store and buy something right away, I shouldn't have to put it down somewhere where someone else could take it. I shouldn't have to go back to my tent and put it away."

There were some more comments like that and it was finally shot down on the second vote, as was a proposal that I made which was that some students volunteer to help the shopkeeper keep an eye on things. The only proposals that passed were that: 1) we apologize to the shopkeeper for the fact that there had been some stealing and 2) that we somehow communicate to the shopkeeper that the kids felt discriminated against and it wasn't proper to assume that all kids were going to be shoplifters.

After the meeting, a group got together who volunteered to speak to the woman in the shop, to communicate what the meeting had passed. We were discussing how to present the ideas of the meeting to her when we agreed that we should have the 6 and 7 year old boys be our representatives, that this would perhaps be one of the most disarming things we could do. We felt very confident in them. Ben and Alfie's mother thought it was a great idea.



Hes Fes children playing soccer.

In fact, she decided that it was best if Alfie and Ben did this on their own without her being there. So Alfie grabbed my hand and the whole group of about 12 or more walked down to the shop, walked in the door, introduced ourselves to the woman who was working there, and I told her that we'd been discussing this problem, and that these two boys were our representatives. They spoke to her in the nicest, kindest way. Alfie said that he knew that she was "under a lot of stress, and that it was difficult to watch all these people in the store," that we knew that there had been some stealing and that "we were very sorry that this had happened and we apologize for that." The woman was amazed at this. She just melted. Some of the other kids talked about their feelings and the girl who had to pay for something twice mentioned that and the woman was chagrined at that. With a little bit more discussion, that was it and we left. The shop manager was heard to say afterwards that he thought that this was extraordinary; he had never seen anything like it before. After that, the woman treated all the children with great respect, and the problem was solved.

Later I stopped by at the store and talked to the woman there. She was very cheerful and still excited about what had happened and impressed with those two boys and with our group.

Before the conference ended Andy Bluett said to

me that next year's Hes Fes is already fully booked at the campground for an even larger number of homeschoolers. The word has spread about this unique event.

Ben, 7, said, "It felt sort of exciting-scary because there were lots of older people around us and we were the only 6-7 aged children around. I think it went very well and I think I had done some good to the world because we had sorted out quite a big problem."

Alfie, 6. Said, "I spoke up and Benny spoke up.. The old lady said, 'Yes. Very good little boy'. She seemed very kind and the other children got a bit kinder. It felt very good because the old lady felt good and most people were happy."

After arriving in England and staying overnight with Derry and Deborah Hannam, I took the train to Axminster, the closest station to the Home Education Seaside Festival. When I got to Axminster I had a conversation with one of the mothers who came to pick me up. As I was talking to her I mentioned that I had a radio show in the United States that was on Sunday mornings at 8:00. Suddenly I looked at my watch and realized that it was about ten past one, which meant that I was missing my own radio show! I had given my equipment to Mary Adams to host the show but I had promised her that I would try to call in. So I called the Talk America Network in Massachusetts collect on the pay phone at the train station. They accepted the call and called me back. I greeted Mary on the air. Not long into that segment, her connection with the Network failed. I recognized the sound, so they had me take over as host of the show on the Network, from the pay phone in Axminster, which was going to 40 radio stations and the Internet! I did the station break, after which they were able to get her re-connected and I promised to give them a report on the homeschooling conference on the next week's show.

I had never (until your workshop) seen people who lost the vote, asked why they voted as they did. I think this is a very useful idea. From what I saw, often amendments can be reached which satisfy more people, and other useful information can come from ensuing discussion. My seven year old daughter, whilst being used to being listened to in the family setting, felt that it was pretty impressive that even the youngest kids there, got listened to and paid attention to, as this frequently doesn't happen in group settings outside of the home. BJ

DRASTIC INCREASE IN RHDD REPORTED

By Jerry Mintz.

In the last ten years, RHDD has been one of the most rapidly increasing deficiency disorders. Many people have lived with this disorder without knowing that they had it, and it explains many disabilities, which have been witnessed throughout the country, perhaps throughout the world. The symptoms are extreme difficulty writing—handwriting can sometimes be almost illegible and general lack of coordination—it can often be awkward to simply throw a ball. This syndrome often produces negative self-image and low feelings of self-esteem. Until recently, diagnosis of RHDD was often overlooked. Now it is estimated that up to 10% of the population may be victims of RHDD. Ritalin and other psychotropic drugs do not seem to be very helpful with RHDD, but this is disputed by the drug industry which insists it has a definite positive effect. Some schools are requiring that these drugs be administered to RHDD students and threaten child abuse prosecution if they are not given. So far the most effective treatment has been intense physical therapy combined with counseling. Some radical "educators" claim there is no such thing as RHDD, but research shows a drastic increase in RHDD cases, especially since the new state and federal digital standards have been put in place, requiring use of the right hand for all students. Meanwhile, all that the sufferers from RHDD can do is hope that some day they will find a cure to Right-Handed Deficit Disorder (also known as "southpaw's disease" or "lefties syndrome") and up to 10% of the population will have to suffer with their difficulties in the required use of the right hand for writing, sports and other activities.

Actually, there is no such thing as RHDD, but isn't this analogous to other labels, such as ADD and ADHD which make a normal human variation into a disease which needs to be treated with drugs? —JM.

The Danish Education System

The 'Folkeskoler'



Elementary school students sing at small Danish Free School

by Robert Powell

The Danish education system is deeply rooted in a long tradition of democracy and in a respect for human rights. One of the consequences of this is that there is an enormous diversity among schools and colleges, with various institutions being run and/or financed by central government, county and district councils, and by a host of 'self-governing institutions'. To make sense of this diversity, and to understand something of the way in which Danish schools operate, it is important to get some of the jargon right, especially as many of the different terms used seem rather similar:

- A 'folkeskole' (folk/people's school) is a comprehensive school owned and run by the 'kommune' (district council). It caters for children from the age of six to sixteen or seventeen.
- A 'friskole' (independent school) is a school run as a 'self-governing institution', but which is largely state-funded, and which provides an alternative to the district council run 'folkeskole'.
- An 'efterskole' (continuation school) is rather like a 'friskole', in that it is also a state-funded 'self-governing institution'; however the 'efterskole' is a boarding-school that caters for youngsters between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.
- A 'folkehøjskole' (folk highschool) is a residential adult educational college, and like the 'friskole' and 'efterskole', it is run as a 'self-governing institution'.
- Apart from these, there is a host of different colleges (with various names) offering academic and vocational training to young adults over sixteen, and to those in later life who need further education.

There are nine years of compulsory education in Denmark. Parents may choose between the 'folkeskole', an independent 'friskole', or home education. The numbers vary from year to year, but at the moment about 88% of children attend local authority 'folkeskoler'.

There is a feeling in Denmark that children need to experience a real childhood (shades of A.S. Neill), and that the most important thing is to grow up with a sense of respect both for oneself and for others. There is among Danish children, and adults, a casual self-confidence which belies a deep-rooted consideration for other people. (I have often seen young people put their feet up on train seats in England, Scotland, and Denmark. The difference is that in Denmark they take their shoes off first.)

The Danes have a well-funded system of nurseries and kindergartens. After which children usually go to the 'børnehave klasse' (kindergarten class - often referred to as 'year 0') at the 'folkeskole'. When they are seven, children start 'year 1' of formal schooling and start on 'the three Rs'. (If this seems a rather late age to start reading and writing, we should remember that six or seven is the norm in Europe - and with good reason.)

There is a national curriculum in Denmark, covering the nine compulsory years to age sixteen. It is, however, much less detailed than that pertaining in Scotland or England and Wales. Essentially, it simply states that children of certain ages must have so many lessons per week in this or that subject (and even then the opt-outs - from foreign languages, for example - for those with special needs are far easier to arrange than here).

English is now compulsory from 'year 4' (10 years old), and all children must at various times study Danish, German, math, woodwork, music, and so on. The local authority does share in the process of deciding what is taught, but it is at school level that most of the curriculum planning takes place. Though parents are much more involved in the work of schools than they once were, it is generally assumed that teachers know what they are doing, especially with regard to the methodology of subject teaching.

In Denmark, as in the rest of Scandinavia, there is no distinction between primary and secondary education. The majority of children spend their whole elementary school career at one school - from the kindergarten class (at age six), right through to the time they matriculate at the age of sixteen. One of the consequences of this is that schools really are part of the community - there is much less bussing from home to school and back, and families retain the links with school that are so often lost when children change school at eleven or twelve.

Danish 'folkeskoler' are small and friendly. Classes are also small, and one form entry is still common in country areas. In the bigger towns, there may be three forms per year with about twenty or twenty-five pupils per class (28 is the

legal maximum). So a “big” school by Danish standards might have about six or seven hundred pupils.

Children usually stay together in the same ‘klasse’, or form, for their entire school career. This has a number of consequences: cross-curricular project work is easier; children are able to use the same form-room (and their own desks), for most of their lessons (and leave unfinished work secure in the knowledge that it will not be interfered with by another class); children get to know each other’s strengths and weaknesses and so can help each other (there is also less showing off, start-of-lesson gossiping, and bullying); and group social activities and trips can be planned and undertaken with relative ease. The form is a social unit that is used to foster a feeling of belonging, and a sense of both self-esteem and social responsibility.

The ‘Friskoler’

If the local authority ‘folkeskoler’ are so wonderful, the obvious question is, “why are so many families sending their children to the independent ‘friskoler’?”

The ‘friskoler’ have a long history going back to the middle of the nineteenth century, and they have clearly had an important influence, not only on the children who have actually attended them, but also on the way in which the mainstream local authority ‘folkeskoler’ have developed over the years. However this does not explain the rising popularity of the ‘friskoler’ during recent decades. In 1981 about 7% of children attended ‘friskoler’; now the figure is about 12%.

Part of the answer lies in the fact that the local authority schools are changing. Class sizes are rising. If pupils are taught in groups of more than about twenty-five, parents complain - or send their children elsewhere. Furthermore, local authorities have closed many smaller schools, concentrating their increasingly limited resources on larger ‘more efficient’ schools. Parents have often set up ‘friskoler’ to replace closed ‘folkeskoler’.

Prior to the 1960s, academic education outside the bigger towns was rather limited, and ‘friskoler’ were founded in country areas to make up for this. Some of these schools are known as private ‘realskoler’, and usually offer a rather academic education. They also differ from most of the other ‘friskoler’ in that they are frequently much larger. In terms of numbers of pupils taught, they constitute the biggest of the ‘friskole’ groupings.

In recent years, there has been a growth in the number of confessional ‘friskoler’ - set up and run by evangelical Christian groups and Muslims, for example. There are also a number of Steiner schools. In southern Jutland, there are also ‘friskoler’ for the German-speaking minority.

Denmark also has about fifty ‘lilleskoler’, or ‘small schools’. These were mostly started in the 1960s and 1970s, by parents with a left-wing outlook. However they have changed. They are still run by the parents, but as political attitudes have changed (especially since the fall of the iron curtain), so they have become more traditional in nature. The biggest of all the ‘friskole’ umbrella groups, in terms of the actual number of schools, is the ‘Dansk

Friskoleforening’ (Danish Free School Association), which describes itself as belonging to the Grundtvig-Kold tradition. These schools are typified by deeply-rooted democratic attitudes, a respect for oral traditions, and a belief that personal inspiration is more important than rote-learning. Many of the founders of the ‘friskole’ movement had a strong belief in the universal and unconditional love of God, and this belief continues to inspire the work of many of these schools to this day. It is the children that are important, and not religious dogma or particular theories about how to teach.

There are about four hundred and thirty ‘friskoler’ in Denmark. Many have as few as thirty pupils; the largest ‘realskole’ has over eight hundred; the average school size is about one hundred and seventy (as against three hundred and fifteen in the local authority ‘folkeskoler’). The average class size is about seventeen.

The ‘friskoler’ receive most of their running costs from the Ministry of Education. The average figure is about 75% of what is spent on the education of children at the local authority ‘folkeskoler’. The governors of a ‘friskole’ must make a yearly return of their accounts, and they must pay their teachers on a nationally agreed scale. Apart from this they are free to administer their funds in almost any way they like - provided they use the money solely for the benefit of the school.

Parents usually have to pay fees of between \$60 and \$150 a month. But there are often reductions after the first child. It is also usual for parents to help out in various practical ways, such as by helping to maintain the buildings.

Government involvement in what is taught is minimal. School governors (which usually means parents) must appoint an inspector whose job it is to make a yearly report to the local education authority on the standard of teaching in Danish, English, and math. There is a requirement in law that the education offered in a ‘friskole’ is broadly equivalent to that offered in a local authority school, but (up to now, at least) this has been given a very broad interpretation.

The ‘Efterskoler’

In terms of organisation, finance, and philosophy, the ‘efterskoler’ very much resemble ‘friskoler’. However, there is one big difference: they are residential boarding schools for young people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

They are called ‘efterskoler’, or ‘continuation schools’, because they originally catered for young men and women who had finished elementary school at the age of fourteen but who wished to continue their education. Originally, they did not offer exams and qualifications - but rather an education based upon the students own particular desire to learn.

Today, however, most ‘efterskoler’ do offer the usual matriculation courses that sixteen- or seventeen-year-olds normally take. This has allowed the ‘efterskoler’ to become a hugely successful part of the teenage education scene, whilst at the same time they are often able to continue the

Danish tradition of 'popular enlightenment' and democratic education.

Most 'efterskole' students attend for one - or sometimes two - years, in the run up to, or just after, their school matriculation. They come for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they feel it would be good to get away from family apron-strings; sometimes they want a challenge beyond what the local 'folkeskoler' can offer. Many schools offer a specialisation in sport, languages, or drama; others cater for youngsters with special needs. As with the 'friskoler' there is great variety.

There are about two hundred and fifty 'efterskoler', catering at any one time for about twenty thousand students. The first was founded in 1851, but more than half the total have been started since 1980. The costs are partly met by central government, and partly by local authority grants. The exact amount paid by the families themselves depends upon parental income, but three quarters of families pay about \$60 per week.

The 'Folkehøjskoler'

For many Danes, the 'Folkehøjskole' lies at the heart of what it is to be Danish. Many of these schools were founded during the formative years of the modern democratic state - and they have helped to shape the nation's progress and thinking ever since.

The first 'folkehøjskole' was founded at Rødding, in Southern Jutland, in 1844. Other schools soon followed, mostly providing continuing education for the sons of peasant farmers.

In 1864, an event occurred that was to leave a deep and lasting impression on Danish society in general and on the 'folkehøjskole' movement in particular: Prussia occupied the whole of Slesvig and Holsten.

One of the consequences of this was that Rødding Folkehøjskole was now in German-occupied territory. So the school's principal - Ludvig Schrøder - started a new 'folkehøjskole' at Askov, a couple of miles north of the new border.

When the school opened in 1865, the first two lectures were on 'Norse Mythology' and 'The Diseases of Horses'. In a way, this seemingly quirky pairing of subjects epitomises the very nature of the 'folkehøjskole' tradition.

There are now about ninety-five 'folkehøjskoler' in Denmark, as well as others in the other Nordic countries and some other parts of the world. In Denmark the schools have retained - at least until now - a number of long-standing traditions. They are all residential; they still offer no formal qualifications; they are self-governing; they continue to receive some support from local and state government; and rather in the manner of the early days at Askov, they continue to offer a wide variety of courses in both practical and theoretical subjects, in an open and socially-aware environment.

Today's 'folkehøjskoler' offer courses lasting from a few days to a whole school year, in such subjects as music, sport, health, foreign languages and culture, Danish

language and culture for both immigrants and foreigners, art, craft, philosophy, sailing, bible study, personal development, fishing, dance, local history, television and film production. However, the 'folkehøjskoler' are in a period of crisis. Student numbers have plummeted.

The 'folkehøjskoler' face two major problems:-

1) There are fewer potential students. In recent years eighty per cent of 'folkehøjskole' students have been in the eighteen to twenty-five age range, but numbers within that age group are declining - by about forty per cent between 1985 and 2005.

2) The government is not supporting 'folkehøjskoler', as much they used to. Benefit for unemployed young people attending 'folkehøjskoler' has been reduced, and only a quarter of 'kommuner' (district councils) now support 'folkehøjskole' students. These cuts have been driven by a political desire to pay only for courses that lead to exam-based qualifications (which the 'folkehøjskoler' do not offer).

There is now a heated debate within the 'folkehøjskole' movement about how to react to these changed circumstances. Should the 'folkehøjskoler' offer exam-based courses (as many of the 'efterskoler' started doing some years ago); or should they continue to rely on the notion that real education comes only from the desire to learn?

The Changing Face of Danish Education

It is not just the 'folkehøjskoler' that are being forced to change. Over the last ten years, local authorities have been given increasing responsibility for the funding of 'folkeskoler' as well as for other education services - such as help with special needs. This squeeze has put great pressure on schools, with rising class sizes and a reduction in some services. At the same time there is a growing popular and legal demand for closer co-operation between schools and parents. Many teachers welcome this sharing of responsibility, but it does create extra pressures.

At national level, the most significant development may prove to be the setting up of the 'Evaluation Institute', which will monitor standards in all types of school and college. For the moment, the 'friskoler' do not have to report to this institute - but for how long?

As a result of financial abuses by the 'Tvind Co-operative' of schools, the government has taken upon itself powers to decide whether 'friskoler' are following the financial regulations properly. Will government money eventually be conditional upon inspection?

Writing in Jyllands-Posten a few days after the Freedom in Education Conference, Kim Hjerrild, General Secretary of the Folk High School Association, wrote: "In chasing after competitiveness and measurable results, we have thrown

overboard fundamental education in citizenship". For some years, I have lived in the hope that people in other countries might learn something about education from the Danes. My fear now is that they will simply repeat our mistakes.

Øse Efterskole

Visited by Robert Powell
on the 31st May, 2000,
along with other EFFE conference delegates

Øse Efterskole has sixty-five students in the 15/18 age range. After government grants are taken into account, fees are about \$2100 to \$3300 per annum.

Courses last for one school year. Danish, English, and math are compulsory. French, German, and science are optional, and there is a variety of other short courses to choose from. Students must also choose one of four special 'lines': Outdoor Life, Art and Craft, Music, or Drama.

Daily life centres around three 'houses' of twenty-two students. Each house is a self-contained unit, with twin rooms and its own kitchen and living-room. 'House-teachers' and students share the cooking and housework. Things can go wrong sometimes: recently one group spent all their housekeeping money before the month was up, and ended up on a diet of porridge for three days - but this was seen as an important part of the learning process.

There is a strong emphasis at Øse Efterskole on personal and shared responsibility. The teachers are ultimately in charge, but clearly openness and consensus are the order of the day. Once a week, the students have their own meeting, without the teachers. There is also a school meeting for both students and teachers, when they talk about issues at the school and in the world outside, and at which of course they sing together.

There are many trips during the course of the school year, including one abroad. Four times a year the whole school spends the weekend based at the school itself, going on local outings or socialising in various ways. During other weekends only one member of staff is left on-site. This single fact speaks volumes about the school's attitude to freedom and responsibility, and the way that students at Øse are expected to grow up.

The Five Basic Freedoms for 'Friskoler', 'Efterskoler' and 'Folkehøjskoler'

1. The Principle of Ideological Freedom - the right of parent/student choice in education, and the right of the minority not to be out-voted by an undemocratic majority.
2. The Principle of Pedagogical Freedom - the right to choose the content, form, and methodology of education,

with minimal state interference.

3. The Principle of Economic Freedom - the right to decide on how funds are used.
4. The Principle of Freedom of Employment - the right to employ whomsoever the school wants, regardless of formal qualifications.
5. The Principle of Enrolment Freedom - the right of the school to decide whether or not a student or pupil be accepted into the school.

Useful Addresses

Ministry of Education:-
Undervisnings Ministeriet
Frederiksholms Kanal 25
1220 København K
Tel: (45) 33 92 50 00
Fax: (45) 33 92 56 67
Homepage: www.uvm.dk

Danish Free School Association:-
Dansk Friskoleforening
Friskolernes Kontor
Prices Havevej 11
5600 Fåborg
Tel: (45) 62 61 30 13
Fax: (45) 62 61 39 11
E-mail: DF@friskoler.dk
Homepage: www.friskoler.dk

Efterskoler:-
Forening af Fri Ungdoms- og Efterskoler
Efterskolernes Sekretariat,
Vartov, Farvegade 27, opg. H,
1463 København K.
Tel: (45) 33 12 86 80
Fax: (45) 33 93 80 94
E-mail: sekretariat@efterskole.dk
Homepage: www.efterskole.dk

Folkehøjskoler:-
Forening for Folkehøjskoler
Folkehøjskolernes Sekretariat
Nytorv 7
1450 København K
Tel: (45) 33 12 00 54
Fax: (45) 33 13 98 70

Nornsalen (Research Institute and Library)
Svendborgvej 15, Ollerup
5762 Vester Skerninge
Tel: (45) 62 24 38 66
Fax: (45) 62 24 28 66

© Robert Powell 2000

This section is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *Human Scale Education News*, whose editor, Fiona Carnie, also attended the EFFE conference. Thanks to Fiona and Robert for letting us adapt it for *Education Revolution*. Human Scale Education, 96 Carlingscott, Near Bath, BA2 8AW, Phone: 44 1 275 332516. Robert Powell can be reached at robertpowell@cix.co.uk In the near future, Robert will be producing a booklet, based on this article, about the Danish Free School Tradition. Contact AERO for more information.

INTERVIEW WITH HENNING DOCHWEILER, PRINCIPAL OF ASKOV FOLK HIGH SCHOOL, ASKOV, DENMARK

JERRY MINTZ: I have just participated in the European Forum for Freedom in Education, here in Denmark. We met at the Askov Residential Folk High School. We're lucky enough to have the principal of this school here with us, Henning Dochweiler.

MARY ADDAMS SHAFFER: What is a folk high school? Tell us about your wonderful school.

JERRY: What age are the people who go to the folk high school?

HENNING DOCHWEILER: People need to be 18 years of age at the minimum and then we have grownups of all ages. 18 is the year of course when you get independence and the age when you normally leave secondary school. This has been the age limit now for 150 years.

JERRY: How did they first come up with this idea for the folk high schools?

HD: Last year we celebrated the 150th anniversary of our constitution and the folk high schools were seen in connection with the breakthrough of democracy in Denmark. They intended originally and I hope they still do today to prepare grownups for a working democracy for involvement. 150 years ago the Danes had thrown off an absolutist monarchy – we're still a monarchy, but not absolutist anymore – and the idea was to turn a very centralist regime upside down. So far we seem to have been rather successful in that and we take pride in thinking that the residential folk high schools have contributed to this development.

JERRY: And what's really interesting is that any group of parents, for example, can organize a school at almost any level and they can get the government to pay 75% of their costs!

HD: Yes, and this is true of all private schools in Denmark, not just schools for grownups like ours. In fact, between 10 and 12% of all our primary and secondary schools are privately owned and run and they receive these 75% grants from the state, independently of their creed and their philosophy.

MARY: Yes, I see, because in this country one of the things that people say they fear is the government getting involved and interfering in religious training. Is that a problem?

HD: No, not really. We have a principle called "arm's length" which means that the government will pay and they pay out of the philosophy that what improves the individual citizen will also improve society in the end. They have respected for a century and a half now the independence and the very different philosophical attitudes of these schools and while you may say surprisingly, they still do. They do control that the money that they give to schools is

spent of course in paying teachers and for buildings and things but they don't interfere with the curricula at any time.

MARY: So they actually do control that the money is used for its intended purpose, but they don't dictate to you...

HD: Yes, that is the important issue.

MARY: That's wonderful. How many students are in your school?

HD: Our school used to be the biggest one with up to 300 students, all residential. Boarding schools with courses of up to nine months — the minimum is normally 12 weeks. Right now we have 80 students; we hope to be 100 in fall. There is a crisis right now in Danish residential folk high schools – there are very many reasons for that crisis – but still you must imagine that there are 96 such schools all over Denmark, so every year we still have about 40,000 Danes out of a population of about 5 million go through our system.

JERRY: Not only that, but people can actually come to these places from outside of Denmark and you have a program for Americans. I want to point out that one of the basic aspects of the folk high school is that you don't have tests, you don't have grades, it's really just pure learning.

HD: That's right – we use the carrot, not the whip as our motivation. You come here totally because you want to improve your own knowledge, and that means of your self as an individual and of the society in which you live. That is the sole purpose. You get a certificate that you were here for a specific period of time, but as you said, Jerry, no tests, no marks.

MARY: Do the students pay tuition?

JERRY: Of course, they only have to pay 25%.

HD: In dollars, it's a bit more than \$100 – it's \$110 to \$120 a week – it differs from school to school. That includes meals, boarding, tuition, and excursions, all kinds of expenses.

JERRY: A little more than \$100 a week, it's a pretty good bargain.

MARY: That's fantastic! What if you're not a Danish citizen?

JERRY: If you're not a Danish citizen and you come during the regular school year, the Danish government still pays 75% as long as the program you're in is 50% Danish.

JERRY: For what they call the 'free schools', which is what they call all of the independent schools, schools like you would start for your age kids, those are much less expensive and the government still pays 75% of the cost.

MARY: Another interesting thing is we're calling it a high school and of course in America we're used to high schools being for 14 to 18 year olds, but there they start at age 18 and go on upward.

JERRY: Listen to what they do for the kids that are 14 or 15. Almost 50% of the kids that age go to residential schools called efterskolers, and they get credits for those grades, grades nine, ten and eleven,

A Brief History of the School of Living

by Rita Jane Leasure

Editor's note: AERO is a part of a larger non-profit called the School of Living. Rita Jane Leasure is the current President of the Board. It's been a while since we did a story about SOL, so Rita Jane kindly wrote this piece.

The School of Living is a non-profit educational organization. We were founded by a philosopher by the name of Ralph Borsodi in the 1930s. His was a wide view of the world. His master work was a book called The Seventeen Problems of Man and Society. In that book he tried to organize and define all of the problems of human society and to lay out the various solutions and/or approaches to those problems that humans have devised over time. With such a broad base to guide it, the School of Living has found over the course of generations that learning and teaching how to live a better life is a very rewarding way to spend your time.

Each generation has found in this organization a place to shape, sharpen, and share its own view of what a better world would look like. Early School of living folks were educators and homesteaders. They put on conferences and taught the seventeen problems of Man and Society, decentralism, organic gardening, food preservation in the home, alternative building and energy technologies, alternative money systems, and they shared their lives, troubles, and joys with each other. By the 1960's the workshops and conferences were about music, international war (Vietnam), civil rights, food coops, food warehousing, communes, alternative medicine, organic gardening, alternative building and energy technologies, and they shared their lives, troubles, and joys with each other. In the 1970's and 80's the focus was on alternative money and economic systems, equal rights for women, intentional communities, community land trust, organic gardening, alternative building and energy technologies, and they shared their lives, troubles, and joys with each other. In the 1990's and into the present we focus on community land trust, permaculture design and implementation, alternative education, alternative economics and money systems, intentional communities, ecological stewardship of land, community supported agriculture, sustainable human cultures, conflict resolution, facilitation, decentralism, networking, organic gardening, alternative building and energy technologies, and we share our lives, troubles, and joys with each other. All with a focus on the problems of society and the learning and teaching of solutions. All with people trying to live sane sustainable lives in an increasingly mad world. Always with our quarterly magazine (the Green Revolution) to tell the world about it.

We try to see the big picture, keep in touch with the varied facets of the progressive movement of our time, and focus on and address those issues that call out to us as needing attention in the present time. We try to support each other in our work for a better world. We try to stay in touch with the issues of the past, to be open to learning

and the government pays 75% of that cost too.

MARY: We have David on the line from Hot Springs.

DAVID (caller): I am going to be producing a television program here in Hot Springs on alternative health. The vice-president of our local talk radio here decided they want to do more progressive things with professional. I always wanted to study acupuncture and chiropractic and become a naturopathic physician. I'm 50 years old. I always wanted to do it abroad because I believe the theories and practices there are more advanced. Are there schools on alternative healing practices?

HD: There are more than 90 Danish folk high schools and they differ very widely in their range of themes. Actually we do have one, it's called the Residential Folk High School for Health Questions.

MARY: If someone is interested in knowing more about folk highschoools, how would they contact you?

HD: I would recommend looking at our home page, which is www.hojskole.dk.

MARY: If we speak English, we assume everyone does and your English is wonderful.

JERRY: It seems like almost all the adults in Denmark do speak English. They take English in school as a second language. It's actually one of the three things that are required in Danish schools.

HD: We start in the 4th grade, so we have at least six years of obligatory English.

MARY: So someone from America or Canada is listening and has a teenager who hates their school and they're thinking about alternatives, sending them to school in Denmark for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade is a possibility.

JERRY: Not only that, but the government will pay 75% of the cost.

HD: It just requires a Danish majority of 50% plus 1 at the schools and you pay the same amount that Danish citizens will pay and you get the same kind of support. I can add that at our school last year we had students from 16 different countries, from all over the world, from Venezuela to Japan.

We have a special course which is called Danish Language and Culture where students are taught not only the language but also the culture and society. We also have a theater line performing in English so there are opportunities for English speaking.

MARY: If you have homeschooling families here in America and they have four children of ages ranging from 4th grade to 10th grade, is there a possibility that this family can visit Denmark for a year and be educated.

HD: Yes, certainly.

JERRY: There's a website for people to check all of the high schools: www.ffd.dk.

HD: Just for you to see the wide range of opportunities so what cannot be met with at our school might be met with at others.

and teaching each other what we do that can be sustainable, support quality of life, and support connections with the earth. We are fiscally responsible and solvent. Most of our educational work is through living examples of people working toward sustainable alternative lives, alternative educational networking, and through workshops on as broad a range of subjects as possible.

Our magazine is always interesting, our meetings are always open to the public, and our approach to newcomers

is open and warm. Most of our money is tied up in land under contract with groups of people trying to live alternative lives. New people, committees and changing focus are expected and welcomed. Check us out.

Ed: AERO offers a membership in the School of Living and subscription to *the Green Revolution Magazine* for \$10, half of the regular price.

Book Reviews

*Long awaited gatto book
now available!*

The Underground History of American Education

A Schoolteacher's Intimate Investigation into the Problem of Modern Schooling (412 pages)

By John Taylor Gatto

For those who have followed the history of the creation of this book, its publication is a significant event. When a major publisher insisted he remove 30 pages he considered crucial, instead he returned their large advance, and ultimately arranged for the publication by himself.

What incendiary ideas could have led to such a sequence? Gatto's thesis is that the American public school system is efficiently doing what it was intended to do: Creating a docile, trained, consumer-oriented population which will not question the control of the country by big business interests. He backs this up by quoting the founders of this system, who actually articulated these goals, and in the process, knocks down icon after icon. You had better read this book. You may argue with it, not agree with some of it. But you should certainly be aware of what John has unearthed. AERO was able to get some of the first printed, pre-publication additions. The cost is \$30, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage.
JM

Saharasia

The 4000BCE Origins of Child Abuse, Sex-repression, Warfare and Social Violence in the Deserts of the old World

By James DeMeo

If John Gatto traces the roots of the flaws of our approach to educating children back several hundred years, *Saharasia* traces the roots of these problems back 6000 years! I happened to come across this book by a fluke, but after reading it, I think it is a very important book for us to ponder.

James DeMeo is a follower of Willhelm Reich. Reich's books were burned by the US Food and Drug Administration in 1958. He was also A.S. Neill's therapist. Those two facts should make you curious.

The back cover says the book features "the revolutionary discovery of a geographic basis to human behavior, the first global cross-cultural anthropological archeological and historical survey of human and social institutions."

In essence, DeMeo believes that something terrible happened in the cradle of civilization about 6000 years ago. This area which had been lush and bountiful began to dry up and become a desert area. People who had previously coexisted peacefully for thousands of years were now forced to compete with each other for survival. The problems and sicknesses in our current society were forged in that crucible. A veritable "Garden of Eden" became the Sahara Desert. One of the results of this was "The loss of age-old gentle and loving forms of child-rearing and male/female relations...with the subsequent development of patriarchal authoritarian and violent, warlike characteristics," giving rise to ritualized child abuse, etc. ORBL, Natural Energy Works, PO Box 1148, Ashland, OR 97520. Ph: 541 552-0118. E Mail: demeo@mind.net JM.

Challenging the Giant: Volume IV

By Mary Leue

Mary Leue needs no introduction. She published *SKOLE*, the Journal of Alternative Education from 1985-1999. Volume IV, 481 pages in length, brings together articles from the fall 1995 issue to the winter 1999 issue. The book is organized under headings like "Talking About Education" (interviews with the likes of Richard Lewis), "History and Character of Innovative Education" and "Teaching and Learning in Higher Education." What made *SKOLE* so compelling was Mary's own brand of humor, an eye for down-to-earth writing and a passion for her subject matter - education alternatives. If you missed the latter issues of *SKOLE* get this book. You can order *Challenging the Giant: Volume IV* from Down-to-Earth Books, PO Box 488, Ashfield, MA 01330. Their

website is www.crocker.com/~maryl.

Review by Steve Rosenthal

Homeschool Your Child For Free

By LauraMaery Gold & Joan M. Zielinski

The premise of this book is that you can home educate your children without spending any money. The secret? The Internet! Ms. Gold and Zielinski even explain how to get a free computer. The 477 page book intersperses lists of websites dealing with everything from legal issues to arithmetic with advice and anecdotes written in easy to understand everyday language.

The book is published by Prima Publishing, 3000 Lava Ridge Court, Roseville, CA 95661, (800) 632-8676, www.primalifestyles.com SR

The Learning Revolution

By Gordon Dryden and Dr. Jeannette Vos

Gordon Dryden's and Dr. Jeannette Vos' vision of the future is "Every four-year old can read, write, spell, count, add, subtract, multiply, divide, compose her own stories, draw, paint and speak three or four languages."

Sounds great if it is the result of parent aided child directed exploration, but if it's the result of parental pressure fueled by the need to keep up with the Jones we will have a society of competitive, approval hungry status seekers.

The authors do say they have a fail-safe law. "We teach all mothers this law. When teaching your child if you aren't having the time of your life, and the child isn't having the time of his life, stop, because your doing something wrong."

A model for education's future? You be the judge.

The book is filled with the results of the latest research in child development.

The Learning Revolution: \$30, Published by The Learning Web, www.thelearningweb.net, email: orders@thelearningweb.net, 800-637-6893.

Review by Steve Rosenthal

(see note below)

Note from gordon dryden
(gordondryden@hotmail.com)

ALL 2700 schools in New Zealand, public and private, are charter schools.

Each has a basic charter that sets out minimum curriculum standards (but, God protect us, no standardized testing or multiple-choice questions) - but then each school adds to its charter all the other goals

and processes it aims for.

Then, of course, we have also abolished our Government's Department of Education and all regional and district Education Boards - and have put the savings into teaching and learning.

But with 2.7 million public school teachers in America and about the same number of other people involved in schooling (mainly those involved in administration, plus counseling, security etc), I can understand the politics of moving to abolish school bureaucracy.

As I may have mentioned before, I have been coming to the United States since 1964, generally landing at Los Angeles. And almost every day I have arrived (8 times in the past year), the LA Times has had a feature article on "the crisis in the LA Unified School District". Yet generally the public debate around this never seems to touch on learning methods, but nearly always on administrative change.

How on earth can the world's most innovative business country have the world's most socialist school bureaucracy (using "socialism" in the Stalinist sense)?

As my presentation to Seattle school principals mentioned last week: America's fabulous economy runs on around 20 per cent of the country's brainpower. What an even more fabulous nation it would be if you unleashed the brainpower of the other 80 percent.

gordon dryden (currently staying at the University of Memphis)

Reflections on the Sudbury School Concept

Edited by Mimsy Sadofsky & Daniel Greenberg

A Clearer View

by Daniel Greenberg

Starting a Sudbury School

by Mimsy Sadofsky & Daniel Greenberg

Reviewed by Steve Rosenthal

The latest offerings from the Sudbury Valley School Press will at least temporarily satisfy the voracious appetite the Alternative Education community has for information about the Sudbury School:

Reflections on the Sudbury School Concept are the observations and thoughts of several differ-

ent people tied together under the headings, "Experiencing a Sudbury School," "The Adult Presence at a Sudbury School," "Sudbury Schools and Vocabulary of Traditional Education" and "Conceptual Frameworks."

During the school year 1998-99, Sudbury Valley School celebrated its 30th anniversary. One of the activities scheduled was a series of six lectures, "The Meaning of Play," "Conversation: the Staple Ingredient," "What is the Role of Parents?" "The Significance of the Democratic Model," and "Why Sudbury Valley Doesn't Work for Everyone" by Daniel Greenberg. *A Clearer View* is the edited transcripts of those lectures

Over the years there have been requests for a guide summarizing the various steps that have to be taken in order to found a Sudbury school. In the Fall of 1995 Daniel and Mimsy embarked on a study of the experiences of various schools and groups for the express purpose of meeting those needs. *Starting a Sudbury School* is the result of that study. The Sudbury Valley School Press, 2 Winch St., Framingham, MA 01701, 508-977-3030, FAX: 508-788-0674

Creating Learning Communities

From A Coalition for Self Learning "Collaborative homeschooling could replace schools," says a new publication

In 1980 there were about 20,000 thousand homeschoolers. In 1990 there were over 200,000 homeschoolers. By 2000 there were nearly 2,000,000 homeschoolers. At this rate there will be 20,000,000 homeschoolers in 2010, and 200,000,000 million in 2020. Impossible! but it shows that schools may be replaced as more students learn out of school than in school. As homeschooling has grown homeschoolers have started forming "homeschool support groups." In the past year or two there has been a proliferation of cooperative community life long learning centers, learning co-ops, and other forms of collaborative non-school learning organizations forming. This phenomena is explored in the new book, and is being promoted by a campaign to create learning communities, by 'A Coalition for Self-Learning.' Members of the coalition come from Japan, Denmark, the USA, Australia, Germany and 8 other countries. Collectively they wrote "Creating Learning Communities" online. Now they provide mutual support in the campaign to "Envision a World Without Schools, and Create a World of Learning Communities." The book, has just been published in hard copy. You can order a copy from AERO for \$21.95 And/or you can read it on: <http://www.CreatingLearningCommunities.org> and join the discussion on: LearningCommunities-subscribe@egroups.com



Ouida Mintz speaking to the Association of Piano Teachers of Long Island

My Friend Lenny

A Memoir of my Life in Music, with personal stories about Leonard Bernstein, Mike Wallace, Paul Simon and others.

By Ouida Blatt Mintz

If the name sounds familiar, it is because Ouida Mintz is Jerry Mintz' mother, and has been a volunteer in the AERO office for ten years. She took piano lessons from the same teacher as Leonard Bernstein and played with orchestra before he did. At one point Lenny was jealous of her. She also played violin duets with Myron Wallace, now known as Mike Wallace of *60 Minutes* fame. The first line of the book quotes Lenny as saying to teen-aged Ouida, "You know, when I grow up I think I'm going to do something in music!" Jerry got his mother started with the book project and she got help from Ray Sandiford, her good friend of the last 9 years (whom she found in the personals after her husband's death 14 years ago), who typeset the book, including the scanning of 150 pictures. They are both octogenarians. In the fifties Ouida wrote popular music. She hired a soft-spoken Queens College student to sing her demonstration records, sometimes singing duets with him. She paid him \$10 or \$20 for each session. That was Paul Simon! Mike Wallace says of the book, "I really enjoyed the nostalgia." Bernstein's son Alexander says, "Much of what you describe is news to me! I was delighted by the way you capture the energy not only of the man, but of the times as well." 400 pages, Bravura Books. \$24.95. Education Revolution subscribers \$19.95. Call the AERO office at 800 769-4171.

The last several issues of the Education Revolution have varied from 32 to 48 pages, yet we have not raised our price since AEROgramme was an 8 page newsletter. In the near future we will need to raise the price, get more financial support, or start taking advertising. Let us know which you would prefer.

AERO Books, Videos, Subscription, Ordering Information

(see new radio show audiotape list below)

Note: You can now order by credit card by calling 800-769-4171! Or from the AERO website, www.edrev.org

AERO-gramme SUBSCRIPTION

\$15/Yr \$20 Out of US

If you are a regular subscriber, you can order additional copies for your parents, teachers or students for \$7.50. You can be a supporting subscriber for \$50/yr.

*BACK ISSUES of *AERO-gramme* 1 through 29 \$5 each.

New! *The Underground History of American Education*

A Schoolteacher's Intimate Investigation into the Problem of Modern Schooling (412 pages)

By John Taylor Gatto

Gatto's thesis is that the American public school system is efficiently doing what it was intended to do: Creating a docile, trained, consumer-oriented population which will not question the control of the country by big business interests. He backs this up by quoting the founders of this system, who actually articulated these goals, and in the process, knocks down icon after icon. You had better read this book. You may argue with it, not agree with some of it. But you should certainly be aware of what John has unearthed. AERO was able to get some of the first printed, pre-publication additions. \$30, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage.

NEW! Creating Learning Communities

From A Coalition for Self Learning

"Collaborative homeschooling could replace schools," says a new publication

In 1980 there were about 20,000 thousand homeschoolers. In 1990 there were over 200,000 homeschoolers. By 2000 there were nearly 2,000,000 homeschoolers. At this rate there will be 20,000,000 homeschoolers in 2010, and 200,000,000 million in 2020. Impossible! but it shows that schools may be replaced as more students learn out of school than in school. As homeschooling has grown homeschoolers have started forming "homeschool support groups." In the past year or two there has been a prolif-

eration of cooperative community life long learning centers, learning co-ops, and other forms of collaborative non-school learning organizations forming. This phenomenon is explored in this new book. \$21.95, and if you order soon, we will send it with no additional cost for postage.

****THE ALMANAC OF EDUCATION CHOICES***, Editor in Chief Jerry Mintz, Associate Editors Raymond Solomon, and Sidney Solomon, with over 6,000 entries by state in zip-code order, and a dozen informative essays about how to start a new alternative, how to start homeschooling, use of computers by alternatives, etc. Includes the Montessori, Waldorf, Quaker, charter, public choice, and at-risk schools. Send \$20 plus \$3 postage. Canada, add \$5. Out of US, add \$10-\$15 for air mail postage. **Special for paid subscribers, only \$15 plus \$3 postage**

****SUMMERHILL SCHOOL, A New View of Childhood***, A.S. Neill, Edited by Albert Lamb. This is a new editing of Neill's writings, an update of the original book, *Summerhill*. **\$15 including postage**

****The HANDBOOK OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION***, Editor in Chief Jerry Mintz, Associate Editors Raymond Solomon, and Sidney Solomon. With over 7,300 educational alternatives described chapters by Ron Miller, Mary Ann Raywid, Jerry Mintz, Pat Farenga, Dave Lehman, Tim Seldin, and others, many indexes. Hard cover reference book published by Macmillan and The Solomon Press. **\$75 Contact AERO for sets of labels from the Handbook/Almanac database. Entire list is \$60 per thousand names. Subsets can be custom-created.**

****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. Education Revolution*** 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 (half price)**

NEW! *Campus-Free College Degrees*, Thorson's Guide to Accredited College Degrees through Distance Learning, by Marcie

Kisner Thorson. Correspondence study, experiential learning, independent study, group study, seminars: organized by subject area, type state. \$24.95

NEW! *National Charter Schools Directory*, published by the Center for Education Reform. It is the 2000 list of all the charter schools in the country, by state, in alphabetical order. \$15

NEW! *The Beginner's Guide to Homeschooling*, Patrick Farenga, President of Holt Associates. 1998 version, great practical overview of how to start homeschooling. \$10.95

NEW! *Making It Up as We Go Along.*, Chris Mercogliano's book about the history of Albany's Free School. \$15

PHONE CONSULTATIONS:

Want to start a new alternative school or homeschool resource center? Looking for an educational alternative for your children? Looking for a job in alternative education? Set up a private phone consultation with Jerry Mintz. He knows what's going on today in the whole field of educational alternatives and can help you with in-depth answers to your questions. Call 800 769-4171 for an appointment. Only \$65. In-person consultations arranged individually.

AUDIOCASSETTES:

New! For the first time, here is an expanded list of the tapes from our show, The Education Revolution on the TalkAmerica Network and Cable Radio Network. Tapes may be purchased for \$10, including postage.

Independent Alternative Schools

#4: John Potter, founder of the New School of Northern VA.

#7: Live from NCACS conference in Chicago. Interviews with Marvin Garcia about Pedro Albizu Campos School, and with a teacher at Clonlara School.

#8: Steve Boncheck of Harmony School in Indiana.

#15: Joe Weber of Contra Costa Alternative School.

#17 Les Garber of Horizons School, Atlanta.

25: Mary Leue, founder of the Free School in Albany.

#52. Grassroots Free School Founder Pat Seery, report on Renaissance charter consultation

#107 Chris Mercogliano, Albany's Free School, Renaissance trip

115 The Free School Live Out and Kimberly

Isaksson's Poetry

#116 Mary Addams Interviews Marshal Fritz of Separation of School and State Alliance

#118 Boarding alternative schools: Horizons, Arthur Morgan, the Meeting School, Stonesoup

#121 Amy Cook and Chandra of Venice Hills School, CA

126 Play Mountain Place, CA

132 From NCACS CO Conf, new NCACS staff, etc

#171 Brian Kearsy and saga of Crossroads School

Charter Schools

#20: Elaine Young, about the NYS Charter bill.

#97. Joe Nathan, "father" of charter school movement.

#108 The demise of Cato Charter School

#114 Arnold Greenberg and Liberty School, Maine

Homeschooling

#5: Homeschoolers Leni and Anthony Santoro. She talks about a lending library of educational games and toys she has developed.

#10: Andy Smallman, founder of Puget Sound Community School, Seattle.

#11: Interview with Professor Margit Watts, expert on educational uses of Internet.

#19: David Colfax, CA homeschooler.

#47 Homeschool parent Loretta Heuer

#83. Clearwater School, with Stephanie Sarantos and Cory.

#92. Pathfinder Learning Center, with Josh Hornick and students.

#99: Mary Addams and son Brad demonstrate question class, organic curriculum.

#100: Marilyn Mosley of Laurel Springs with staff and students.

#103. Glen Blomgren of Christa McAuliffe Academy, with students.

#111 Betsy Herbert and South St. (homeschool resource) Centre at Goddard Reunion

#112 Andy Smallman and Puget Sound Community School

#119 Pat Montgomery and Clonlara School

#124 Jan Smith, homeschooler and owner, freecomputers.com

128 Ann Hodges, homeschooler, and NYS Home Ed. Network

#WBAI 2 Jerry Mintz is interviewed by Basir Umchowhi about homeschool resource centers

Public Schools

#21: Mike Denisenko, Graduate of School Within a School, Brookline, MA.

#26. Dr. Robert Ferris, founder of New Orleans Free School

#53: Ten signs you need to find an alternative,

with Mary Addams, Jerry Mintz
 #72: Tom Williams, Alternative Education Director, Sweetwater District, CA.
 #81. Ron Miller talks about problems with the standards movement.
 #82: Discussion of boy who was made to remove his Yankee shirt in school.
 #131 Arnie Langberg and Littleton Crisis, on day of the shooting
 #136 Westchester teens reactions to Littleton
 #140 Lise Rubin, parent of students refusing to take MCAS test
 #142 Bob Barr, public alternatives pioneer, from Alternative Ed Conf, CT
 #150 Aftermath of Columbine, Jefifer Goldman
 #153 Gene Sommerfield and son, MCAS test refusers
 #154 Peter Allen, 12 year old co-host
 #WBAI 3 Jerry Mintz interviewed about standardized testing, charters, homeschooling

History of Education

#65. John Taylor Gatto
 #147 John Gatto on WBAI

Alternative School Alumni

#44. Summerhill and Modern School discussion with Summerhill grad Josh Popino, Jon Scott
 #46. Alt Ed Alumni discussion with grads Gabe Prost, Angela Cross, and Jenifer Goldman

International Alternative Schools

#67-69: International Student Alliance Camp, with Russian, Chinese and American students
 #96. ZOE Readhead, Head of Summerhill, with parents, student, and Ron Miller
 #109 The Russian Math School Camp
 #138 Interview from England with ZOE Readhead about Summerhill School
 #144 Summerhill students talk, at Summerhill
 #145 From Summerhill International Democratic Education Conference, Derry Hannam, school inspector, and Helen Hughes, Windsor House School
 #148 Int Student Alliance from Walker Creek ranch, CA
 #155 Mara by computer from Hadera in Israel
 #178 ZOE Readhead tells about Summerhill court victory

Self-Help

#13: Joanna Camp, about remineralizing the earth, and Ron Miller, editor of *Great Ideas in Education*.
 #31. Futurist and author Robert Theobald
 #57. Daria Brzinski discusses children and holistic medicine
 #141 Jeff Grossberg, consulting for building up non-profits
 #146 Dr. Dennis Jensen, Inet Library

#157 Madelin Suozo, Celestial Harvest
 #158 Stu Fleashman on college financing, from 6 Flags in NJ
 #162 Matthew Cross, self-educated non-profit business consultant
 #179 Chris Mercogliano of Albany's Free School on "ADD" and Ritalin

Miscellaneous

#6: Live from Youth Summit in MA, Chris Kawicki, a Hampshire College graduate starting a new school in VT, and with a Berea College student.
 #40 Author, Morty Lefcoe, changing your paradigm.
 #61. Role of father in education: Matt Minafo, Bill Heuer, Chris Mercogliano
 #80: Eerie Halloween stories.
 #86: Election day, discussion of what age people should vote, with 13, 14, 15 yr old callers.
 #110 The School of Living and Heathcote Community
 #156 Michael Lalvani, table tennis
 #174 Ouida Mintz tells story of her life in music

VIDEOS

* New video of International Democratic Education Conference at Stork Family School, in Vinnitsa, Ukraine. \$25

*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. Also highlights of Puget Sound Community school, & Clearwater School in Seattle \$25

*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 was cured, returned to find he had passed his class. If you want, we'll add the interview with Jerry Mintz and Jenifer Goldman on CBS Up to the Minute, in which they discuss their books. \$25

***GABRIELLE SHOW**, November, 1995. A one-hour video aired nationally on the FOX Network, featuring homeschooling and a homeschool resource center, with public and homeschooled children and Jerry Mintz debating with a public school union representative. \$25

Item	Price	P & H

TOTAL ORDER, AMOUNT ENCLOSED		
\$ _____		
Supporting contribution to AERO _____		
(Make checks payable to AERO/School of		
Living) \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other \$ ___		
Name _____		
Phone () _____		
Ad- dress _____		
State _____		Zip _____
email: _____		
Credit Card Order (Visa or Mastercard):		

EXP: ___/___		
OR CALL 800-769-4171		





“Where’s my Ritalin”

AERO
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
417 Roslyn Rd.
516-621-2195

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albertson, NY
Permit No. 124