

THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION

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Nastya from Stork School in Ukraine, Artiom from England and formerly Tubelsky's school in Russia, and Nikita from Siberia, bringing a watermelon (arbooz) back to the ship from the market.

CHANGING SCHOOLS section:

John Gatto: A Radically Uncivil Society

Dayle Bethel: Saving Our Children, A Japanese Approach

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

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Title: Lower Manhattan today: where the World Trade Center used to be, taken by Jerry Mintz from Brooklyn

Our Changing World

Albert Lamb

It has been a couple of months now since the devastating attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but probably it is not long enough for us to get much distance from it all. Just as millions of children around the world were settling in for a new school year in September they were witness to the most horrendous live event of the television age. Within a couple of hours, and in front of all our eyes, thousands of people died and a familiar piece of our beloved New York skyline was blown to dust.

Immediately afterwards everyone talked of the world having profoundly changed but for children it is harder to measure this change. For many of them it will have been a sort of first death for them to have to experience. Big, public events of grief and fear can be hard for anyone to deal with, not just children. Sometimes the hardest thing is when you feel a sort of nothing, or don't have the feeling that you think you ought to have. A teenager said to me the other day that people at school keep talking about it but that she can't notice any difference in the world around her. It all seems just the same, except that now there is a new show on TV - The World at War.

That is one of the immediate changes, but there are others. Back in the summer we had a rightwing Republican president in the White House going it alone on the world scene, rattling sabers at the Russians and the Chinese, and threatening to unilaterally retreat behind some new high-tech (and high-priced) national missile defense shield. Now America has a government of national consensus, leaving behind its old international rivalries and trying to forge a coalition with every country available to fight a new (and inevitably high-priced) war. Is another terrorist attack coming soon? Are we going to be subjected to germ warfare on a mass scale? Will the war against Afghanistan widen into a war in the Middle East? And could our world economy go down the tubes? Nobody knows - and, in fact, this new level of uncertainty in the world may be the biggest change of all.

In the short term, during the next few months, we will have to find words to explain to our children what is going on in Afghanistan, not just with the bombs and the troops but with the humanitarian disaster of a noble people who are now likely to die in great numbers from starvation. Good may somehow come out of all this eventually but, whatever else is happening, we are all being fast-forwarded into the future.

All of this will impact on children and schools. I've read that in England dieting companies are losing business as people turn to junk food, alcohol and cigarettes. Many couples are splitting up or making up, in response to these events. Employment seems less secure with jobs being shed in tourism and aviation. And, affecting everyone, a new concern is shared that the world we have trusted in for so long is no longer safe. Is it safe to fly? Is it safe to open our mail? Is it safe to trust the people around us? Can we even really afford to become truly multicultural societies? I grew up in the 1950s when America was gripped with fear - fear of communists and fear of the bomb. That fear settled like a cloud of gray dust over everyone's lives during those years. My stepfather was a professor of philosophy at Columbia, and a socialist. Somebody in the government must have thought him a communist because in the 1960s our home phone was tapped, our mail was opened, our friends and neighbors were questioned and, until he took the government to court, my stepfather had his passport taken away so that he couldn't leave the country. The primary fear then was to be seen as being different, to be seen as holding dangerous beliefs.

In our apartment building, in the late 1960s, there was a woman who ran a group that was trying to shut down the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was still investigating citizens fifteen years after McCarthy was discredited. One profession, throughout the era of McCarthyism, was investigated more thoroughly than any other: more teachers had their lives destroyed by investigations than members of any other profession.

It may not be so bad this time. We may not end up with a House Terrorist Opinions Committee. The current mood, where children have been handed flags as they come to school and even told to come in dressed in red, white and blue, may pass. Americans may wake up and look around at a diverse world and find that they want to take a new part in it. Diversity may come to seem acceptable in some new way.

Maybe we can make a start in that direction by celebrating our own diversity. Alternative educators of every sort have something essential in common - a willingness to diverge from the norm. We all are marching to different drummers but this could be the time for us to really join the band, our own marching band. Whether we follow the ideas of Montessori or Neill, are homeschoolers or are part of charter schools, belong to a Sudbury Valley school or are just trying to bring something different into a public school classroom, we are the experimenters and the life-affirmers. What we have in common is greater than what traditionally has kept us apart. Whatever our particular alternative, all of us believe in taking that alternative road. So, let us learn to get along better with each other. Onward, fellow marchers, to the coming Education Revolution! ■



The Kabul

Wali

David Harrison

It is Wednesday, September 12th, the day after the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC. We had left school (Puget Sound Community School, *Ed.*) the day before not knowing what we were going to see and hear when we got home. How bad was it? How many were dead? What hints of events to come would we find coded in the images and reports? By this morning, while we didn't have many answers, we had all seen the pictures. We had heard the commentaries and the speeches. Most of us were beginning to feel our opinions congealing; some of us expressed our emotions openly. We had talked it over with our families and with each other at school. We had taken account of our loved ones. We had let the disbelief and horror and grief settle into us. The hardest part was thinking what to do next. How could we feign normalcy? What simple daily actions were appropriate when so many were suffering?

At school, Deb had already planned for us to be out in the Wallingford neighborhood that day, doing community service and getting to know our new neighbors. It came to me - with a simple and powerful and unquestionable knowing - which business we should introduce ourselves to first: Kabul, an Afghani restaurant on 45th. It seemed the perfect gesture, the perfect way to integrate what we stand for as people and as a school with the events transpiring around the globe. Especially in light of the fact that American bombs may soon be falling on Afghanistan and that the owner and his employees could reasonably expect to soon feel the sting of discrimination and hatred.

After lunch, Deb, Zac, Lylli, Jason, Kelsi, Sahra, and myself all walked up 45th Avenue to offer our support in whatever way we could. Walking, it seemed like an ordinary day. We all chatted and talked, and were passed on the streets by people going about their business - shopping, sipping coffee in cafes, waiting for the bus. It was hard to imagine what was going on at that very moment in New York and DC and rural Pennsylvania, what everyday citizens like ourselves in Muslim countries must be bracing for.

When we arrived outside the door to Kabul, we debated who would do the talking. After a few rehearsals and some

hesitation, Zac decided that he would be willing to knock on the door, but he wanted some help with the introduction. After asking one more time if any of the students wanted to join Zac, I assured him that I would help out if he needed it.

Zac knocked, and the owner, a handsome, stylish, kind-looking man, made his way to the door. Zac introduced us and explained why we were there. With incredible grace, the owner understood at once, and relieved almost instantly any awkwardness we might have felt. He showed us around the outside of the building, and agreed to let us sweep the sidewalk and street around his restaurant. Before we got started, he introduced himself as Wali, and thanked us. He told us that he had in fact received threatening phone calls, and had decided to close down the night before. He feared for the safety of his employees and customers. After a moment's hesitation, he asked if this was normal for our school, or if it had to do with "what was going on." I laughed, and answered him honestly, "Both." He smiled, too, satisfied, and let us go about our work.

We swept the sidewalk and entryway to the restaurant, and picked cigarette butts and trash from the curb. As we were finishing up, Wali joined us and talked some more. As his words unfolded, I realized that in a matter of a few minutes, he had explained to us, in a vivid and living way, the complexities, the real and personal intricacies, of all that was going on around us.

Wali's story alternated between recent history and his relationship to current events. He had been born in Afghanistan before being sent as a boy with his parents to New York City. In the wake of the bombings, he had friends and relatives that he had not yet heard from. He was worried, just like everyone else. He had lived and gone to school and run a business in Seattle for the past thirty years. He considered himself an American, and a valuable part of the neighborhood. He hoped this standing would protect him through what might come. He told how Afghans had once been America's darlings as they fought for freedom against the Soviet Union, a fact that led to the CIA training and US funding of Osama Bin Laden. He explained how he had learned, as an ethnic American, to bend with these changes in American policy and opinion, to enjoy the times of favor, and take nothing for granted when perceptions swerved. He condemned what he called "those Taliban animals" that now control his homeland. He showed us pictures of the one-hundred-foot-tall Buddhas the Taliban had destroyed with rocket launchers. "What does it take to destroy such beauty?" he asked us, an American Muslim grieving for the icons of another religion. We shook our heads and had no answers. You could see Wali struggle with his feelings. On the one hand he favored doing "whatever it takes" to root out the Taliban, but he was worried for his people and his country, afraid of what might become of them both here and abroad.

Lastly, Wali told us of some advice his uncle had given him long ago. "My uncle told me, 'Never lose your accent. It is a reminder of who you are.'" Then Wali said one of the saddest things I've ever heard. "I'm wishing now that I hadn't taken his advice." I was struck by the subtle human costs of the violence we were witnessing. Here was an obviously proud and successful man being moved to question the valued advice of a loved one, to lament the character of his very beginnings.

Despite the sadness of his story, though, I was grateful for the lessons Wali had given us. So much complexity and confusion and grief all shedding a probing light on not only the life of one

simple man, but also on the less sensational ramifications of a global catastrophe. I felt so lucky to hear his words, and to share in their telling with my young friends and colleagues.

After finishing his story, Wali handed out drinks to the students, and asked if we would pose for a picture outside of his restaurant. We stood beneath a mural painted on the side of the building, a beautiful depiction of Afghani horsemen in traditional garb, the famous Hindu Kush Mountains in the background. I was saddened to think that our wars lately seem to unfold on such historic stages. The Gulf War entailed the bombing of Baghdad in the cradle of civilization. The destruction of centuries-old architecture throughout the Balkans. And now the threat to Kabul, the gateway city to the famous Silk Road that linked east and west. Sahra broke me from these thoughts when she kindly told Wali to stand with us so she could take his photo. He agreed happily.

The last thing we said to Wali before we left was that a group of us from the school would be coming back for dinner that night. Wali smiled and said, "You have made my day. I was so sad, but not anymore."

That night, some of us returned for dinner. Over the course of two hours, fourteen of us came together for a delicious meal of eggplant and fresh noodles seasoned with onions and tomatoes. Simple and delicious foods. It was a typical school gathering, a mixture of staff, family, students, parents, volunteers, and acquaintances. Talk alternated between the events of the day and the more casual conversation of friendship. There was such a sense of communion and relief to be there with friends, to linger long over a meal, forgetting for a short time the devastation in other places. At one point, my friend Colleen noted how good it felt to laugh, something none of us had done in two days. I was also glad to see that Wali and his employees, his family and friends, all enjoyed the same sort of company. Throughout the night, people came and went at Wali's table, where they talked and worried and laughed along with us.

Wali checked in with us now and again, and expressed his appreciation in more ways than just the complimentary drinks and the discount on dinner he provided. He showed it in his smile, and in the ease with which he moved, despite the tumultuous emotions we all knew he was feeling. It was clear that a powerful and reciprocal friendship was emerging between our school and this member of our new neighborhood. We said our goodbyes with mutual gratitude and a sense of real connection that seemed important when so many are screaming for blood.

Unfortunately, this story does not have an entirely happy ending, but it is important to take note of how the night came to a close. As the last group of us left the restaurant, both Michael and I noticed a man who was visibly angry as he walked slowly past the restaurant. He glared inside and at us, muttering under his breath. While we could not hear his words, I can only assume that in some way he was upset with us for supporting Wali, that he had already allowed a blind sort of hatred to gather in his soul. We watched wordlessly as he walked away, and then sped off in his truck.

The message in this ending is clear. That as the aftermath of Tuesday's events unfold, our lessons and our work are far from finished. It is encouraging to know that we have all been involved in such a powerful first step, one that will carry us forward into the future. But seeing the look in that angry man's face undid any sense of do-gooder-ism I might have allowed

myself to feel. This was not to be a one-time incident. Going home and feeling as if I had done my part was not an acceptable response. It is very likely that the hatred and anger will get worse before they get better. And for those of us who care, we will be called upon by our own principles to make these sorts of gestures again and again - over the next months, maybe years - if we hope to salvage any sense of human dignity and unity in the face of the wars we may fight both at home and abroad.

Unexpectedly, I found myself at Kabul again on Sunday night. The place was packed. Not a single table was empty. I saw Wali, dressed in a baseball cap and kitchen whites, working hard to deliver meals, take orders, and help out in the kitchen. As I waited in the foyer with a group of friends, I was struck by this outpouring of support. And I also noticed that Wali had hung an American flag from the coat rack. It hung in the foreground, while behind it, Wali's collection of beautiful embroidered fez's captured the wonder of mixed heritage and culture that makes our country unique in the world.

After another delicious meal (during which our waitress apologized again and again for being out of certain things- "It's just been so busy these past few days."), I got a chance to speak again with Wali. He was tired but ecstatic. He told me how busy it had been, how a neighbor had sent out an email and 65 people showed up for dinner together on Friday. Wali, so moved by their support, decided to donate the proceeds from their dinners to the Red Cross.

As Wali and I talked some more, we discovered that we shared a connection to the East Coast and New York City. We shared in common places that we loved and the scenery that in part makes us who we are. At one point, feeling our intimacy grow, I felt comfortable enough to tease Wali, joking about how he had "ruined my night" by being out of firni (a delicious rosewater and mint custard), and he laughed. As I turned to go, I heard Wali's parting words, "I'll bring you a bowl of firni at school next week," and I think he meant it

Dave Harrison is in his third year of teaching at PSCS. Previously, he spent five years at the Albany Free School, and was the founder of Capital District Fields of Dreams, an inner-city youth sports program. In his spare time, Dave writes, reads, and serves as a contributing editor for the Albany-based magazine "Journal For Living." Dave and his wife Cathryn live in Seattle, while their 8-year-old son Madison has returned to Albany on his own to attend the Free School. ■



*Palisades protesters
Photos by Ludmila Hararuk*

A Tale of Two Tests

Dana Bennis

In Palisades, New York on October 9, two events occurred simultaneously:

Event One: Inside the luxurious IBM Conference Center, 16 state governors, numerous corporate executives and a handful of select educational leaders gathered for the 2001 Education Summit, to expand accountability measures and standardized testing throughout every state in the US.

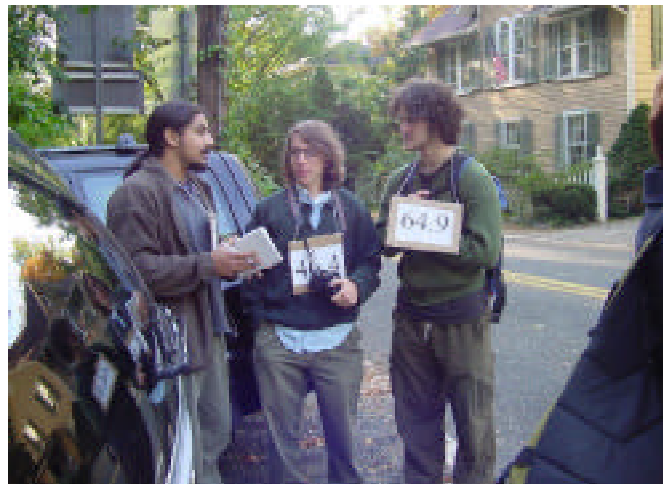
Event Two: A half-mile from the IBM Conference Center on 9W, in front of a large antiques store, 25 people gathered to proclaim that testing is not the answer. The closest meeting of the two groups occurred when several of the attendees of the Education Summit were spotted driving towards the conference center, passing the antiques store and glimpsing the twenty-foot “We Love Learning” and “NoMoreTests.com” banners.

Bill Wetzel, who created both the Power to the Youth (www.youthpower.com) and Students Against Testing (www.nomoretests.com) websites, organized the protest after learning about the private Education Summit only 6 weeks before the event. Perhaps a gathering of only 25 is not that impressive; but coming at a time when the US had just begun bombing Afghanistan following the September 11 tragedy, finding 25 people willing to protest an aspect of US policy is a feat.

Quoted in *The Journal News*, a local paper in the Southern New York region, Wetzel said, “We believe corporate executives and conservative state governments are not the only people who should be determining the future of education. They have a very pro high-stakes standardized testing agenda that is turning schools from centers of learning to centers of test preparation.”

Inside the Conference Center, IBM Chairman and CEO Louis Gerstner Jr., Michigan Governor John Engler, and New York Governor George Pataki were among the key speakers. In his remarks, Engler compared the September 11 attack with Sputnik in 1957, an event that prompted a strong emphasis on academics in education so that the US would not fall behind the Soviet Union. “We’re in a new war,” said Engler. “We know that education must play a central role in the defense of our nation. Our schools must produce the people who have the math, science and engineering skills to keep our defenses strong.”

Louis Gerstner sought to quench the growing number of testing critics by claiming they want to “preserve the status quo.” He continued by stating that testing opponents show “a pathetic willingness to sacrifice an entire generation — and deny them their shot at a better chance, a better future and a better life.” The full text of these speeches can be found on the website for Achieve (www.achieve.org), an organization formed by corporate CEO’s and governors in 1996 to increase the presence of standards and testing in schools.



Bhawin Suchak from the Albany Free School, Bill Wetzel and NYU student, designated by numbers

This protest follows on the heels of a series of anti-testing rallies and demonstrations last spring in such cities as Detroit, Boulder, and Albany. Present at the October 9 protest was Monty Neill, executive director of Fair Test (www.fairtest.org), a Boston-based resource and advocacy center working to end the abuses of standardized tests. Other demonstrators included students from New York University, staff and students from the Albany Free School, an independent alternative school in Albany, NY, and staff and students from the Bedford Academic Community, an alternative high school in Westchester, NY. Free School students are not forced to take the standardized tests, since the school is private. However, due to Commissioner of Education for New York Richard Mills’ removal of a waiver allowing alternative public schools to use portfolio assessments, the Bedford school is now forced to administer and prepare its students to take the Regents tests.

Quoted in *The Journal News*, Melissa Russini, 16, of Bedford, says, “I learned more doing hands-on stuff. Now that they’ve taken that away, we’re like a regular high school. They are cramming us with work and it’s not as interesting as it used to be.”

Cars driving by the antiques store on 9W read the banners, with messages including “We Don’t Need Tests to Learn,” and “Tests Don’t Teach,” and many drivers-by honked their agreement. The group held their own People’s Education Summit, to talk about future ideas and plans. Suggestions included additional protests, regular meetings of those in the New York City and tri-state area opposed to the testing, and national and local email listserves.

More information about the opposition to standardized tests can be found at the Students Against Testing site www.NoMoreTests.com, and the Fair Test site www.FairTest.org.



Early Leonard

“Unless we understand the nature of the national system that is driving state education systems, no movement to stop the transformation of our nation’s public and nonpublic schools into job training and indoctrination centers can hope to be successful.”

I teach in Canada and the grip is tightening here in Ontario as well. I was in England, and the same thing. If you go into web sites for states, Canadian provinces or the British National Curriculum you find disturbing similarities. The same basic organizational and assessment structures, the same language and phrases. And most frightening of all, the same anonymity of background, research and people. In Ontario our curriculum documents are nameless - no references, no one to engage in debate or criticize.

Now this stuff, control driven, often surveillance rather than assessment driven, has to have roots. So where is the university, where are the educators, where is the business management school where the original policy papers for all of this educational ideology hatched before it was chosen by central control freaks (who obviously knew a good stranglehold when they tripped upon one)?

And it is a structural ideology. Control ideology first and foremost. Oh, local groups of teachers are asked if they want the solar system instead of liquids in grade 5 science - but that’s a sham, a fake tip of the hat for involvement. Because whatever is allowed to be chosen is then dropped into this overriding structure and it is the structure that is molding children and shaping society. And no one is made to defend it on educational, child developmental or any other grounds. It is a power bulldozer sweeping true education away. I would propose that the aim is to produce consumer-worker warriors for the GNP wars, in the same way former children were molded for trench warfare. These people need to be stopped but they have cleverly made themselves invisible. It is Kafkaesque (an over used term, but appropriate here). Those who have fashioned this attack on children and democracy have the whole western industrial world in their educational grip and it is now spreading beyond that.

Since it is anonymous it has been able to avoid most activist organizations and protests. And how will the world change unless

the education system is freed up? So much for WTO and IMF protests - because those organizations flourish after the fact, after the education of the public. Activists should be protesting at the gates of the Ministries of Education to make education a truly liberating and democratic experience - because it is a truly free and democratic citizenry that those in control don’t want. Such citizens would be the most likely to bring organizations such as the WTO and IMF under proper balanced control.

And no conspiracy theories here, just crafty planning by a lot of like-minded movers and shakers who know that control is essential to their visions of the world.

It is a fundamental fight that must be, first of all, exposed, defined properly to the public, and won. *Leonard Turton* ■



Alexander Adamsky at home

Eureka! It’s Adamsky!

The scope of recent changes in Russian education is hard to comprehend. Here is the story of one of Russia’s leading exponents of change. The following text comes from an interview with Alexander Adamsky by Jerry Mintz while in Russia this last summer.

In Russia even the name is not so easy. Most people call me Alexander Adamsky, but in Russia your last name is usually related to your father’s name, so my last name, in that case, would be Izotovich because my father’s name was Izot, the Russian version of Israel. You might then realize that I am Jewish. Previously it was a big problem in Russia to be Jewish. For example, when I was in university in 1972 it was almost impossible to study at an important university or department. Now it is not as big a problem, but there is still a trace of it. For example, when I started my television show, an editor said, “Again a Jewish face on the screen.”

My work now has several different facets. One of them is as Chancellor of Eureka Institute of Educational Policy. We organize and support the movement of innovative education, mostly in Russia. We support educational initiatives from teachers, students, parents, administrations, politicians, etc. We find logistical support, financial support, etc. We do teacher training

for teachers who would like to create educational alternatives, mostly in state schools. We now have about 1000 schools in our general network, with 595 schools in our Eureka Federal Experimental Site Program. These schools are recognized by the Ministry of Education, and are given a special certificate and much more freedom. We have about 200 more who have applied to join the network.

It has been difficult to establish this program. We started in 1986. At that time we organized Eureka pedagogical clubs. This was in the Communist era, and it was unusual for people to organize for themselves without permission. We have an annual event called Eureka Author's Schools. In a way, what we mean by "author's schools" is alternative education. In 1997, after ten years, we signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education. We find the schools and help them to develop, then the Ministry gives them certificates.

From my point of view the most important aspect of these schools is diversity. But there must be freedom for children, no violence from teachers, a non-authoritarian approach, self-determination on the part of the students. I believe the school should be a model of an open society. This movement is growing. Now we want to work on the development of content and structure of an alternative curriculum.

Last year the Russian Duma voted to give us ten million dollars, but the Duma can not determine how the Ministry of Education spends its funds, so after a fight we got one and a half million. I am also one of the members of the editorial board of the First of September Newspaper. This paper comes out twice a week and goes to 250,000 subscribers all over Russia. I write a front-page editorial in each issue, as well as edit a supplement for educational restructuring of schools. I believe these publications are having a big influence for change in Russian education. I feel it when I visit these schools and programs. I also have a private consulting program and sometimes travel to Israel, England, and the USA.

I see alternative education and the standardization movements as working in opposite directions. Initiative is necessary to establish alternative education, or in fact, all education needs initiative for development. On the other hand, standardization limits initiative. I believe we have to come to some kind of agreement between society and the state in order for initiative to be encouraged again. We have actually put such a proposal to Putin in order to try to find a balance between a strong influence from the top, and grassroots approaches.

Alexander Adamsky Eureka@online.ru ■



Students in the Youth Forum lead modified "Power Shuffle" in one of their keynotes

A Democratic Youth Forum Speaks Its Mind

Jerry Mintz

At the recent Spirit of Learning conference in Hawaii (see Being There), in addition to delivering one of the conference keynotes, I had the responsibility of organizing the Youth Forum through a democratic process. The forum ultimately consisted of 18 children from 9 to 19 years old, from a variety of geographic and ethnic backgrounds, publicly educated and homeschooled. It was one of the most challenging tasks I have ever faced, and one of the most powerful events I have experienced. One of the challenges was the need to integrate up to 9 adults with the youth. They had been assigned to help out, and had a variety of roles and backgrounds.

The activities of the Youth Forum culminated in the group completely directing the final full day of the conference, including the delivery of two keynote presentations, and six workshops. During one of those presentations, a youth panel, it seemed as if every word they spoke was poetry, and many in the audience were in tears. They talked about their experiences with ageism, their love for their parents, their thoughts about the future, their greatest fears, etc. Afterward they did workshops on art, outdoor survival, acting, ageism, psychology, and unschooling.

The process for the students of planning the organization of that day was dynamic and tumultuous. Keynote ideas were discussed and rejected. They decided not to demonstrate the democratic process as one keynote, perhaps because they didn't want to be "observed," but wanted a more direct interaction. The students used the democratic process to ask all of the adults to leave the planning process the day before their presentation.

They decided the first keynote would be a brief version of the "power shuffle," in which the conference group would be asked basic questions about education and other matters by the students, and would physically cross a line to take one side or another on the question. There was no discussion until afterward. The second keynote was a stirring youth panel. As one of the

girls said, “We were fired up!” Below are some quotes from the panel in reply to written and live questions from the audience:

Question: Could you survive going into public school if you had to?

Clay: (17)

“I am one of the few here who has never gone to school. Recently I had an experience with a public school theater group at a high school here. I had reservations about how I was going to interact with a large group of high school teens. I soon learned that socially ... I don’t want to sound boastful or anything, but it was never an issue. It was actually an insult to my intellect to indulge in the conversations that happened around the public school. What kind of clothes do you wear? What music do you listen to? What’s the point? Academically, well, I don’t think that’s the issue. I think that’s why we’re all here, because academics in the school system are ludicrous.”

Garrett: (19)

“What do you mean by survive? Because I could be in school and going through the functions of the day and living and breathing; but is that 100% living? Is that being who you really are? I don’t mean to say that school is bad but the way in which it is run today, for me, is that really living? It’s surviving, but it’s not living. Being in a place where you can’t be who you really are and express yourself.”

Genevieve: (16)

“I agree with that. I’m in public school and I feel totally just...squashed. I do not feel free to do what I really love. Everything is formatted, all about points and grades. The child is never considered. We get all the same assignments, the same stuff, and we’re not the same people. It doesn’t make any sense. If somebody said to me what do you want to do, what do you love to do, I would be ecstatic. It’s not that difficult to do, it’s pretty simple. You just have to be open to that option I think.”

Zack: (15)

“I think it depends on the environment and how it affects you. I’m sure there are public schools that some do feel protected and open in. Saying public schools are all bad ... the label public school is way too broad to answer a question like that.”

Nell: (15)

“For me it depends on who you are as a person. Some people don’t have a good home life and don’t know who they are and the public school system doesn’t help there. But if at home you are encouraged to be who you are and you know who you are you can survive. It’s about who you are. If I went to public school ... I don’t want to go to public school ... but I know I would do fine. I know people who become passive and don’t know what their opinions are because they’ve become stifled. That makes me really sad.”

Question: Can you accept the love we are offering you?

Garrett:

“If it is true love, and not just something you think we need.”

Nell:

“Don’t give me rules, give me guidelines.”

Garrett:

“I definitely had a different experience not being in school and part of that was to let me think out of the box and express myself. I still don’t know who I am but I do know where I stand on a lot of things.”



*Some of the students who participated in the Youth Forum
Top, From Right: Lowi, Leeni, Garrett, Morgan, Sky, Zack, Jeremiah
Bottom: Kyle, Dana, Genevieve, Clay, Yashoda, Nell, William*

Question: What are your greatest fears?

Yashoda: (13)

“One of the things I’m afraid of is not being accepted for who I am, but being judged by the way I dress, the way I walk, the way I wear my hair. Most people dress the way they dress, not because it’s the way they want to, but because it’s what they think other people like. They are so afraid of not being accepted that they will chop off all of their hair. They’ll get facial surgery so people will like them. They are so scared they won’t be accepted. It’s not totally conscious. But it’s not OK with me.”

Zack:

“My biggest fear is becoming a puppet to society.”

Kyle:

“My biggest fear is that one day growing up I will forget everything that I feel now and stand for and I will just become another one of those people wandering around the streets doing what everyone else does and doing it because it’s easier. Just because the path less taken is harder and longer and I just couldn’t stay the course because I wanted to take the easy way out.”

Zack:

“I really challenge you to think and reflect on what we’re saying

and please don't just agree with everything we're saying. Really think about it."

Kyle:

"It's so annoying to be held back from your full potential because there's just one rule that you can't get past. And remember, sometimes you have to listen to us too!"

Zack:

"Sometimes we do need to let go of hope. If a situation is so rundown, you just have to let go of it. Sometimes we definitely need to do that to move on."

Clay:

"I get my courage and my dreams from my freedom. If you're told that you need to know what you're going to do when you grow up, does that inspire you to go on and do it? It's in the time that I have to think for myself that I become empowered."

Nell:

"Don't just listen to me, be interested in what I have to say."

Zack:

"Ask us our ideals in any given situation because we'll always have something important to say. It's not what can you do, it's what *we* can do; it's going to take everyone to make a difference."

Question: What did you think of the conference?

Dana:

"One of the things that struck me about this conference is that there's a lot of focus on spirituality here and that's amazing and good. But it isn't really seen as something that can be lived, we can't just live as spiritual, soulful, amazing, incredible human beings, but instead we have to do all these weird candle-lighting smelly things. That's not pure spirit; it's all in what's shared, what's given. I would have done it more about living it."

Leeni: (17, Hawaiian)

"What you have had to say here is important. But after a while I felt like I was in a classroom again and being lectured to. I think you could have had more fun and learn at the same time. You were doing the same thing every day. To try to soak everything in is impossible. I had a lot of fun. I have fun no matter what. But we can also get sick of each other!"

Yashoda:

"We're not making you sit there, because we know how it feels. So you can just get up and dance for all I care. Just do what you want!"

Tor:

"I would have put more emphasis on younger people, who are the ones who really need and want the educational system to be changed, not those who, by default of our society, are beyond the educational system."

(This led to Tor's 9-year-old sister, Chanterelle, making a comment from the audience, whereupon the students invited her to come to the stage and join their panel.)

"I do appreciate you all coming together like this because I know it was for us, but I do think we would all have benefited more if we had been thrown together more like this and to express our opinions more because I don't feel we've communicated enough about this issue."

Zack:

"Just focusing on spirituality, we miss something greater. It becomes not sacred but something that's holding us back from the whole ... and we need to look at the whole picture. Not education *or* spirituality ... we need to look at it all."

Question: What do you think is the most important thing to learn?

Nell:

"The most important thing to learn is to be true to ourselves – to accept that we're always changing."

Sky:

"Recognizing that you can never completely know yourself is an enormous part of knowing who you are."

Question: Who are your heroes?

Leeni:

"My hero is my mother. She has taught me so much about being honorable and how to have integrity. I love her so much."

Question: Why didn't people bring notebooks to the youth panel when we brought them to other presenters?

Morgan: (15)

"That was a good observation. But for me personally, I'm really not concerned about it. I wouldn't want 100 people coming in with notebooks. I'd rather have people looking, their eyes fixated on us and actually listening to us."

Zack:

"There may be boundaries but let us explore our own boundaries; let us have freedom and autonomy because that's what we need."

Audience comment:

"I'm receiving you with my whole body and my heart. You got us laughing, crying, and moving, and I'm so grateful. I would like the next Spirit in Learning conference to be planned by you (students) and led by you."

Audience comment:

"I have three young grandchildren. I want to say to all of you on the stage: You have given me something to take home to them."

Audience comment:

"Take your spirit and what you have learned here and go out and change the world."

Zack:

"Take with you now what we've shared and don't let it stop here. Keep listening, but treat us like equals too. We don't just want to be heard. We need to hear from you also."

Being There

Travels With Jerry Mintz

October

The Spirit of Learning in Hawaii

I recently participated in the Spirit of Learning conference, on the Island of Kauai, in Hawaii. It was a follow-up to a similar conference last year at Findhorn, Scotland, and was organized by Jennifer Day. The setting was a campground with a many cabins, which was operated by a local private school, which was also on the grounds. We were able to use their gym, classrooms and cafeteria.

The weather was unlike anything I had experienced before. It was constantly alternating between clouds, sun and rain. The rain would come suddenly and last only minutes. Not far from us was the wettest place on earth, an old volcano at the center of the island which effectively scrapes all of the moisture out of the passing clouds. On the western side of the mountain was a desert. The island is about 40 miles across, with a road going around three quarters of it, stopped by big mountains and a mini-grand canyon. There are about 50-60,000 permanent residents. Tourism is the main industry, but there are still remnants of sugar and coffee plantations, fishing, etc. Lately there has been a serious effort to save the original Hawaiian culture and language, and this was showcased at the conference. One of the youth forum participants has gone to a Hawaiian language immersion school and has become expert at Hula and other cultural traditions.



Chazy, 7 year old who Hawaiian girl, who helped demonstrate Hawaiian culture at the conference.

At the conference we were also fortunate to have Yeou-Cheng Ma, a doctor and concert violinist, organizer of youth orchestras, and sister of Yo Yo Ma. We had many other interesting presenters, including Joseph Chilton Pearce, Chris Mercogliano of Albany's Free school, Jack Miller, Linda Lantieri, Ba and Josette Luvmour, storyteller Lindamichellebaron, instructors and practitioners of traditional Hawaiian dance and song, just to name a few. A number of participants came from Britain and had been at last year's original conference at Findhorn, in Scotland. Most of the people who planned to attend came despite the recent September 11 disaster. Those spiritual people are a hardy bunch!

Perhaps the most popular keynote was by Alan Watkins who did a presentation on "Heart Math." In his demonstration he showed how emotions effect heart rhythm and "coherence," and how that effects the way we function and learn, and how we can learn to control it.

After the conference I did a consultation for a week with local residents to help them create a homeschool resource center. Some of the students who had been in the youth forum helped out. We created the center and named it Keiki Hokulea. Keiki means "children." Hokulea is a guiding star ancient Hawaiians used for navigation, thus, "Children's guiding star." The group met four times that week and organized a way of continuing into the future. A number of new people got involved through a local radio show (in which the students participated) and two public meetings



Jerry with Chazy, 7-year-old Hawaiian girl who participated in the conference.



Children from demonstration resource center on field trip to radio station on Kauai. Some were on the show.

Late July – Early August

Landing in England

We arrived in England at eight in the morning, July 27th. Not long after that we were joined by Steven Sanford who had arrived earlier. We had introduced him to Summerhill on a trip four years earlier and he had subsequently gone to Summerhill for two years. He had been traveling with his father around England and had gone to the Summerhill end of term party a couple of weeks earlier.

Life In the Cotswolds

We went on the train to Stroud from Paddington Station and were picked up by Popsy Lamb and got in at suppertime to the Lamb's house, one of my favorite places in the world. Albert is doing several editing projects for AERO now.

On Tuesday we went to Avebury. This is perhaps the oldest



stone circle in the world. It's at least 5 or 6 thousand years old – older than Stonehenge. It was still a little difficult for me to walk (it turned out I had sustained a ruptured tendon before the trip) and at one point when I was coming down the road an earth-

get to the side and I sort of fell over in order to get out of the way, right into some nettles! We had a little lunch and then we went off in search of crop circles. We found one not very far



Peter in a crop circle

The next morning we had a meeting with some people who want to try to start an alternative school in Stroud. The meeting was pretty low key. There were a few parents there and a couple of kids. They have had a bigger group involved in organizing this but some people have gotten cold feet. People with the older kids have broken off and may do a little homeschool group. So what they're left with is parents of about 10 preschool kids and they're renting this space that's part of a youth center, and they have a little outside space too. They're planning to start this year. I told them that maybe this was for the best – it's better that they all kind of be on the same page. I also suggested to them that it might not be the best thing to do it as a parents cooperative. But there seems to be one main leader and I think that leader should be empowered to make some decisions for the group as a director. We talked for about an hour and a half and we'll keep in touch with them.

Home Education in England

Albert put us on the train to Birmingham. Mike Fortune-Wood picked us up and brought us to his house. Three of the kids were there, and his wife Jan. Jan is a vicar or priest for the Church of England,

Mike has a major website for English home education (www.home-education.org.uk) and he estimates that there are something like 50,000 home-educated children in England now.

Summerhill's 80th Reunion

It was raining when we got to Saxmundham on the train and called Miller's Taxi. John Miller brought Peter Christopher, Stephen Sanford and I to Leiston and Summerhill. They had a room reserved for us upstairs in the main house. During the entire time, in true Summerhill style, there wasn't much scheduled. They figured the former Summerhillians would bring their own agenda. It was mostly former Summerhill people meeting each other. I was surprised at how many people I knew. I think there

were about 100 people who came and I knew at least 60 of them. I'd met them either as former students, current

The next morning Zoe gave me the key to the stable where the ping-pong table was locked up and said I could set that up for people. There was a fair amount of ping-pong during the reunion. One of the kids I taught is the son of two people from France; his name is Gaetan. His father's name is Russell and his mother's last name is Bernard. She's French, he's English. I remember her younger brother, Olivier, who was a Summerhill student a few years ago. At one time they were talking about starting a school in Lyons, France, but even though they had land they were never able to get it going. (Gaetan has since decided to go to Summerhill and has changed his name to Jake).

On the Saturday there was a wonderful presentation by Zoë and her husband Tony about the fight that they had been in last year to keep the school going and not be closed by the government. They described just how they had gone about doing that, how they impressed the judges, how they brought the kids to the House of Commons to demonstrate a meeting, and how they marched on 10 Downing Street.

In the evening there was some great music with Albert and a whole lot of other former pupils and one older woman by the name of Dahpne Olliver, playing the trombone, who had been housemother to the rest of the band at Summerhill when they all were young children. It was neat, with people from the various generations playing a lot of nice old music, jazz and standards, and so on. This was Albert and Popsy's first time back to Summerhill for three years. There was a long toast by Hilda Sims, who is a former student, to A.S. Neill, and another long toast by Albert to Ena Neill.



Dribbling on the chessboard

Michael Newman is a staff member who is doing a lot of outreach work. In the next few months he'll be working with state schools helping them with democratic processes and also he is going to be working with people to try to get the study of Summerhill and democratic education into the standard curriculum. I talked to Hilda Sims who has a new novel that features a school like Summerhill. She gave me another novel, with an educational theme, that was just written by David Gribble - one of the founders of Sands School. I met an 87-year-old man who had been at Summerhill in the 1920s and I spent a lot of time with younger ex-Summerhillians that I have known over

the years.

At her meeting Zoë talked about how the state wanted to withdraw its complaints against the school and in some ways Zoë hesitated to go along with their deal because the school hadn't really used all their ammunition – the huge files that they had built up for defending the school. One of the things I pointed out, that I learned from Saul Alinski (the great civil rights organizer) was that some of his best ploys were ones that he never had to use. In this case, the government will never exactly know what Summerhill had up its sleeve if they had continued the case and they may be less likely to mess with them in the future.

A Russian Alternative Education Newspaper

We were met at the Moscow airport by Artiom Solivitchek. I knew his father Simon who was the founder of the *First of September* newspaper, which is a newspaper for alternative education in Russia. Simon took us into his office in Moscow and gave us a tour of the offices. I was pretty dumbfounded. This newspaper has a circulation of about 250,000. That's their *regular* newspaper, which comes out twice a week with 8 pages. Then they have 21 supplements that come out every two weeks. They're each 16 pages long and in 21 different specialty areas, but all of them with an alternative slant. Those specialty area publications have a circulation of about 10 or 15,000 each. They cover everything from chemistry, physics, psychology, counseling, to geography. Each supplement has an office and arranges for teachers to contribute to them. Virtually every school in the country is a subscriber.

Artiom Solivitchek recently traveled around Russia and went to different schools and found that they all had some subscriptions to the paper. He said that he writes checks for about 1,000 people, including all the contributing editors. They also have a book publishing business, where everything is done extremely inexpensively.

They sold something like 2 million of them last year. These are books that written by teachers with alternative and innovative methods. They also have a website in which they put all of their regular publications and a couple of their specialty ones. He's convinced that this does nothing but increase the circulation. They have some advertising on the website and some in the magazines. But they make a profit.



Artiom Solivitchek

Artiom told us a lot of his life story. Of course he grew up with his father, a fairly famous writer and educator. But he did terribly in school, went into the Navy for a few years, and wound up going to university after that, studying psychology. He eventually went back to the US, where he had studied, and taught at Lesley College for about 8 years. They have a sort of extension program where people form small groups all over the country - if they can get 20 people, the program can run a course that is accredited by Lesley College.

It turns out he made a lot of his money in the United States as a storyteller when he first got there, traveling around with a famous storyteller. After that he did workshops and courses on storytelling for Lesley College. At one point he was even flying back to the States to do two weekends out of the month. He is just an amazingly entrepreneurial guy.

He came back to Russia in the early 90's because his father needed his help at the newspaper. He thought it would be just for a short time but his father died in 1993. At the time he had some very successful businesses going in the US. His whole orientation actually was more business. When his father died, he decided to try to stay on for a few years to keep it going and build it up and he has done an amazing job of it.

From Moscow to the River

Artiom Solivitchek took Steven Sanford and Peter Christopher and I on a little tour of Moscow and again I was amazed to see how vibrant the city is and how much it has changed from the dull, drab city it was even five years ago. There are all kinds of construction and reconstruction projects and exciting things being built everywhere. He says the same is true in other places and it's really a boom area and whatever you want to start a business in, you can make money. He said one of his friends took over a couple of little factories that were doing nothing and is making more money than he ever dreamed of. So it seems we're being given a somewhat inaccurate impression in the US of what's going on in Russia. He also said that education is doing well and that there are many innovative schools now that are taking the ideas of Tubelsky and others, and things they read in *First of September*, and making them work.

We had to get up at 5:00 in the morning as the boat was now about 200 kilometers away. Artiom Solivitchek's driver took us there. We drove for about three hours and we got to the boat. We had a little problem figuring out how to get our stuff down to it because there wasn't a road right down to the dock. We hadn't even unpacked my bags from the car when they had me joining a presentation of teachers at this first town. They weren't planning to do a presentation there but the local teachers wanted to hear about what the *First of September* was doing and what our group was doing. I talked a little about what AERO does and other people made presentations but we had to pull out of there early to start getting our baggage down to the boat.



Off on the river

10th Anniversary Conference

There was a little hassle on the boat at first but eventually we got a room for the three of us. Pretty soon we were off on the river. There were about 90 people on the boat who were part of the floating conference, to celebrate the Festival of New Schools of the Soviet Union ten years ago, and then there were maybe another 30 people who were just tourists. It turns out that very few of the participants brought students.

AERO raised funds for seven students. One is a current Stork student. That's Oleg's grandchild. There are three graduates of the school here who go to Moscow University. Then there's a graduate of the Kluch School. There are five students from a school in Siberia.

After the talk I gave on the boat, they told me they needed me to go to see one of the schools they were going to visit during the next stop. We walked quite a way through this town, got to the school, and there was a crowd of teachers waiting for us. Afterwards, we walked back through a small kremlin (kremlin just means, I guess, a fortified town) that's being rebuilt in this city.

In the afternoon, we stopped in a city where we were supposed to visit some schools and then go on a tour. But this city just had pulled out all the stops for us. It's an old city and they brought us to four different schools with the same director of education meeting us each time with a different group of teachers in each school. The schools had all been painted and had many exhibits. There were TV cameras to interview people. They asked me to say a few words at every stop. At the last one there was a big, amazing layout for a tea, with all kinds of confections, fruits and food.

One thing that shocked me was one of their graduates was a famous rocket scientist - they were going to make a museum in his name and they had a big room with all of his memorabilia. His biggest claim to fame was he developed a nuclear warhead rocket that would split into ten so that it would defeat the American Star Wars. They showed a little video about him - they were very proud of him.

I had a lot of conversations with Artiom about how this was fairly ordinary stuff educationally, but that were trying to move in the right direction. As much as we really didn't want to see it all, it was really important to them and they were really proud of their schools and what they had done and that was probably a good thing for their students. There was some really beautiful

tapestry work and lace making that they did in the schools.

While still on the Oka River we went to the town of Murov and people seemed a lot poorer than the other towns we went to. There were a number of beggars on the street –. But again, there was an audience of teachers there crowded in a room interested in hearing what we had to say. It was an old city. We went to where they are reconstructing a monastery and a church. I got to do a little email at one of the schools and then accidentally wiped out all of my messages.

Last night somehow or other, Artiom discovered that it was Steven's birthday and he organized a great birthday party for him with cake and presents and singing and dancing and toasts. And Steven said afterwards he was really touched by it; he couldn't believe how much people care about each other here. I'm sure he'll never forget that birthday. I also called the office last night for the first time since we've been on the boat using Artiom's cell phone.

After we made the transition from the Oka to the Volga we came to an old nunnery. It was a monastery and has a very interesting history. It was founded by Greek Orthodox priests but everybody was wiped out by the Tartars and then one of the Tartars said, Oh, we worship the same God and he freed the prisoners. It was abandoned for very many years but now it's being lived in by about 20 nuns who raise their food in gardens and have quite a bit of tourism coming through which supports them.

Floating Meetings

That night at 10:30 we had a meeting, the first meeting of all the participants. It went for about 45 minutes and lots of things came out of it. We talked about what people liked, but also complaints, problems, suggestions, and out of that came a few changes in getting the students more involved in everything. After that we had a meeting of the organizing committee and they implemented some of the suggestions people had made.

The next morning I had a meeting with all of the kids for a half hour and then a second one at lunch time. I guess there are 13 or 14 kids, altogether. Some of them not that young, some recent graduates, but all younger people. They had been talking about workshops that they want to do and about how they want to do their presentation. As a Stork kid said, "It's going to be something nasty, like funny pictures of people, things to shake people up a little bit."

In the meeting Peter asked the kids why they weren't going to the workshops and basically the answer that they all agreed to was that they were really boring. Peter said he could probably help the kids get more out of these things.

Once we were on the Volga we went through some locks and out onto some great big open water where we headed up the river toward Moscow.

Later that day I was asked to run two presentations. The first one was the meeting of the people who had been at the first festival ten years ago. That was just a remarkable meeting. That conference introduced people to Montessori Schools. Someone recalled that at the First Festival people wondered who this Mr. Montessori was, and why he had so many heavy bags! What came out of it was that perhaps 1000 Montessori schools had been started in Russia as a result of their introduction at the First Festival. There were over 600 Eureka schools that were now

connected through the work of Alexander Adamsky. Eureka trains teachers in alternative methods of education. Even Larissa Marinova from St. Petersburg was amazed to find that there were schools based on her work with peace families. They told a lot of stories about things that happened the Festival. Someone told the story about how when they heard I was coming they thought I was from the school of Montaigne and they all studied Montaigne. Then they discovered that it meant Shaker *Mountain* School. I told the story about when I was locked in the bathroom and Larissa's son got me out. Many years later, when she was visiting people in the United States, someone mentioned my name. "Jerry Mintz! My son saved his life!" Beyond the funny stories, it was really clear that there's been a tremendous impact from the First Festival.

We took a short break and then we went into the student presentation. About 10 or 11 of the students gave presentations about their schools, about School #42 in Siberia, the Stork School, Kluch School. A boy named Artiom talked about his experience, first in a regular public school and then in Tubelsky's school, and now going to school in England.

Meanwhile, There's been a lot of discussion of something they started calling 'virtual school,' which really is "ideal school." This is something that a lot of Russian people have been talking about and Peter got involved with that group. There was some thought that maybe the students would be interested in doing something similar.

While out at another school presentation I discovered a school called Generous Apple, which is a 60-student private school organized by parents.



Sunset on the river

The Kids' Ideal School

The next day we had our third kid's meeting, two days after the kids made their presentation. We talked about several items. The first one was: Have kids been involved with many of the adult seminars. A few of them had been, and one of the Stork kids said she had gone too, but it was still boring. We talked about making our own. A few people volunteered including Ann and Artiom (the 12 year old one) and others to try to make an interesting game for adults that the kids run, like a treasure hunt or a scavenger hunt. Then we discussed doing our own version of the 'virtual school' idea that a lot of the adults have been doing. We started a discussion and everyone thought it would be a good

idea. We had about 14 kids there and about 10 decided to stay and discuss this.

We started talking about the “ideal school” and the first thing they said was that it needed ideal teachers, a good building. Someone said it needed perfect students but somebody else said it didn’t. Someone said it had to have the opportunity for every student to learn. One of the kids from Stork School felt that her school was close to perfect.

Then we started discussing grades and the need to change the system of grades. Some people thought evaluation was worthwhile, and that a written opinion by the teacher could be interesting. In the end everyone decided that no grades was the best policy, even though some at first thought they could be used as motivation – even the girl from Stork at first thought this and then she decided it wasn’t necessary.

One of the boys from the school in Siberia thought that students should have the opportunity to choose classes but that they must go. After further discussion on that, people felt that forcing people to go to classes was not a good idea. Olga from Siberia was one who didn’t think the Sudbury-type approach was a good idea. But Nastia said she thought that children are naturally curious – Nastia is the fifth-grader from Stork School. Nikita, who is an 11-year old, said he really liked his Montessori experience before his regular school experience. He liked it because it was more individualized and everyone seemed to agree that individualization was a good idea. The person who disagreed was Timothy but he couldn’t exactly say why.

Slava said it was important to start this whole process young, before curiosity in children was lost. So the conclusions they came to were that there should be no grades, there should be mutual understanding between the teacher and the child, there should be freedom of choice, there should be an individualized approach, and there should be no force used to learning.

We then started talking about a physical plan. People didn’t want just square rooms and desks; they wanted armchairs and couches, they wanted a lot of classes outside and traveling to places, and bringing the outside in wherever possible. We talked about the idea of Internet access, which everyone thought was important. Artiom thought that they should ban games, but after a lot of discussion even Artiom said he thought he learned a lot by playing games on the computer. People thought it should not be banned.

The idea of play itself was thought to be important, and relaxation was also important. Kiryil brought up that health was important – there should be medical help, good and interesting food with choices and good nutrition. They felt the best way to make decisions was by a consensus approach. We talked a little about the approach that we used in my school. They weren’t too happy about the idea of ‘tyranny of the majority’ and tended toward the idea of consensus as a good way of making decisions.

That was typed up and translated into Russian and posted. Most people thought it was a pretty good expression of things. It was modified a little bit so hopefully we’ll have a final version emailed to us.



Teachers host Festival group at their school in a city on the Volga

Arctic Education

At one of the schools I went to we had a whole lot of introductions and they took almost the whole time. One of the people from the school asked me what I thought about alternative education and I told him that we meant learner-centered education that included everything from Montessori on up. He said we should just talk about free schools and I was able to tell him about my school and how it ran.

Right afterwards, several people asked to talk to me. They are going to be working on a project in a region that is called Chukotka, and this is just opposite Alaska in a very remote area. There are 20,000 kids and 70,000 people in an area the size of Germany. They only have spring, summer and fall over a three-month period of time and the rest of the time it’s just snow.

A very rich guy moved to that area and has hired these four people from the northern part of Russia near the Urals to go out and try to organize a program to revamp their whole educational program. This is one of the richest guys in Russia, maybe one of the richest in the world now. He’s maybe 35 years old.

They have had two sessions with me and I also have gone to a workshop with them. I hope to try to work with them. They want to organize education in these little schools, as small as 8 kids, spread all over this region. They want to do distance learning, homeschooling, programs for kids who need special help, some kind of university program and a training program.

These are mostly aboriginal or natives and have the same kind of background as the Aleuts in Alaska. There’s a tremendous alcoholism problem. They were particularly interested in the experience I’ve had with the Mohawks and others. I talked about possibly being able to go up there or bring some of the Mohawks I know, to help them organize something.

It seems this guy who is now the governor of this territory has got the funding to do some good things. Of course his first project was really just to work on feeding people and health and so on. Somebody said the governor’s personal taxes amount to something like 30% of all to collected taxes. This region is likely to be sitting on a lot of oil - so it may have been a smart move on his part to go there.



closing ceremony

The Last Day on the Ship

We stopped in the city of Tver and I went to an Internet café and did my email for a while. It's a pretty good size city; the boat stopped there for a long time. We didn't meet anybody from any schools here. I walked up to the city a second time with three of the kids: the youngest girl from the Stork School, Artiom, and Nikita. I was looking to buy another ping-pong paddle and Artiom wanted to buy an audiotape. But we wound up buying a big arbooz, which is Russian for watermelon. We took it back in a taxi and we'll use it for tonight's celebration.

In the evening, the Russian teacher had her final examination, as she called it. It was a performance by the Russian

students. I managed to finally learn the Cyrillic alphabet on this trip. Then we all had our final celebration, but it wasn't exactly a celebration, it was almost like a religious service. There were candles and music played by three or four people... sort of eerie music in the dark. Several people spoke. The whole thing went on till about two o'clock in the morning. They apparently gave the watermelon that we got to the captain as a present. Someone said it was better than giving him the traditional case of vodka and maybe safer for us.

We stopped at a beach the last morning and people spent a lot of the day swimming at this beach, along the Volga. Late in the afternoon I ran their auction. It was quite successful. We raised in rubles the equivalent of about \$100 and this was supposed to go for the next festival. Meanwhile, an anonymous donor decided to put up a \$250 matching fund and try to get people from out of the country to match it - so that the translators could get paid. They had worked for nothing the whole time because of the financial situation. We raised enough to give each of them some money.

The auction went on for about an hour and was kind of fun. I gave the Stork girls about 500 rubles to bid with and it was neat, the youngest one did all of the bidding and she was like a young tycoon along with the Europeans who had money to bid with. A lot of the people got at least a little something. That was our last official activity.

We had meals and then said a lot of goodbyes and packed. The boat pulled in about eight in the evening and people spent a long time in the parking lot talking. Oleg was in from Ukraine to meet the kids. Different people were saying their goodbyes and there were lots of hugs. ■

MAIL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Edited by Carol Morley

GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

Message received from France: To you Jerry, to your family, to your friends, to America, to the whole world, thoughts of hope, love and peace. Signed with more than 50 signatures of individuals and families.

The results of a survey conducted by **Public Agenda** and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation find that teachers and parents find smaller schools more appealing, but see other education reforms as more pressing. A large majority of the 801 parents (80%) and the 920 teachers (85%) polled say smaller schools are better at spotting troubled students. The survey is the first phase of a larger study that will compare the views of high school students, parents and teachers from both larger and smaller high schools on a range of academic and social factors. The complete study is set of release this December. Public Agenda, 6 East 39th St., New

York, NY 10016-0112. Tel: (212) 686-6610. Web: www.publicagenda.org.

Helping Children to Play Can Stunt Their Creativity, by Cherry Norton. Parents who spend a lot of time encouraging their children while they are playing are unwittingly damaging their creativity. A study presented at the **American Psychological Society** conference shows that children are more creative when parents are not always encouraging them. The researchers said that a lot of parental involvement, previously seen as beneficial, suppressed creativity because it turned play into a structured activity, leaving the child feeling anxious to perform well. Dale Grubb, of Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio, a co-author of the study, said: "The adage that parents want to encourage kids to color between the lines appears to be true. Parents need to allow their kids

to feel free to experiment if they want their children to grow up into creative and original adults. If parents get involved too much, the child feels they are being evaluated and judged. While the demand on creative individuals continues to increase, teachers and parents are looking at ways to foster creativity and originality in the next generation. This research shows that although parents need to encourage and support their children, there are times they should just allow them to get on with it." The researchers expected parents who interacted with their children would have more creative offspring, but the findings show the opposite.

OBESSU is an umbrella organization for all the student unions or student organizations in Europe. We also have contact with similar organizations in Australia, the U.S., and a Danish primary school student union. I am 20, from Norway, and working in the secretariat of OBESSU's office in Amsterdam. OBESSU is now working on a project about learning, "The School Student in Focus". This project is mainly focusing on democracy, learning methods, teacher's role and student's role. We are also creating a homepage about learning. We are interested in getting in contact with people around the world who work in the field of teaching and learning. We are very interested in information about different people with different points of view on learning. Christian Mollerop. Email: christian@obessu.org.

From Ken Jacobson at U Mass: Adults seem to think they ultimately know what's best for children. My research indicates the children have a pretty damn good idea what they want. Since the public school 'student governments' I have observed were farcical in the amount of actual power they allowed the participants, children seem to have no recourse but to resort to a kind of guerrilla warfare. What is needed is to legalize the reality. Children need legally to be able to state what they want to do in and with their lives. It is not enough that some adults decide that their children should be privileged to attend a free school, or to run their households in a Neillian fashion. It used to be that in some societies wives were chattel, owned by their husbands. We would not accept that attitude today anymore than we accept any person's status as chattel. Yet isn't that the de facto status to which children are relegated until at least age 16 if not age 18? From my own research, I see perfectly 'normal' children being put on drug therapies because the adults in their lives, rather than taking responsibility of the adult environments that are stressing the children, blame the victims. This practice, and many others, could easily be construed as illegal if the recipients were adults. Why should age matter? Getting the ideas out there, showing the absurdities on which the justifications for parental absolute authority (and the authority of schools) are based may of and by itself have a very positive effect over time.

"Young Tech-Savvy Mentors Can Teach Their Elders Well", by Martin Miller, *Los Angeles Times* as published in *The Charlotte Observer*, September 11, 2001: Jeff Conor, age 16, spends time after school helping teachers at his Olympia, Washington, school become more comfortable using computers. The world of commerce also has had to pair

younger, more tech-savvy workers with senior employees and management to keep pace with the explosive growth in computer use. Dennis Harper, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, founded "Generation www.Y" (<http://www.genyes.org>) a national student computer-training program. According to Harper, this is the first time in history when young people know more about something central to society. The trend is called reverse mentoring. Though not labeled a reverse mentor, that is exactly what Jeff Conor and 75,000 other students from 500 schools have been over the past five years. As part of Generation www.Y, students in grades 6-12 take a semester-long course that trains them to tutor their teachers on incorporating technology into the classrooms. Reverse mentoring received a huge boost when Jack Welch, the former chairman and chief executive of General Electric Company, directed 500 of his top managers to find an in-house tech mentor.

History Books Thread

In response to a request from AERO email list member **Robin Podway** for a non-gender, non-racially biased history book, the following suggestions were made:

A History of US, a set of 11 volumes, by Joy Hakim.

The Brown Paper School, US Kids History Books.

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn.

The Underground History of Education by John T. Gatto.

Lies My Teacher Told Me by James W. Loewen.

Three-volume history of the America's, the first volume of which is *Genesis*, by Delgado.

Critical Thinking in United States History by Kevin O'Reilly.
You Decide! : Applying the Bill of Rights to Real Cases by George Bundy-Smith.

Digging Into Archaeology: The Bloodline of the Holy Grail by Lawrence Gardner.

Myth and the American Experience by Nicholas Cords, Patrick Gerster.

The **International Education and Resource Network (iEARN)** has expanded to 94 countries involving 500,000 students daily in collaborative projects that enhance learning and improve quality of life. Founded in 1988 to enable young people to connect to the Internet for education and social responsibility, iEARN has become the world's largest educational network. iEARN projects are designed by teachers worldwide who share the vision that education can be enhanced through experiential, collaborative project-based learning. Information on iEARN is available at www.iearn.org.

MONTESSORI SCHOOLS

The Back to School 2001 issue of *Tomorrow's Child* is a special issue focusing on the basics of Montessori, an introduction to Montessori philosophy and practice. Included are articles about becoming a Montessori teacher, elements of the

Montessori approach, a list of teacher-training organizations, a brief biography of Dr. Maria Montessori, a list of books and manuals, and more. This issue is a helpful primer for those new to the Montessori method and interested in learning more about it. The Montessori Foundation, 17808 October Court, Rockville, MD 20855.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

We extend our thanks to **Judy Stein** and **Magnet Schools of America** for their support of AERO. Judy writes: "On behalf of Magnet Schools of America, I am happy to provide support for your cause. We must all work together for the alternative schools. Don Waldup said, 'instead of a school system, we need a system of unique schools.' You represent those very unique schools – even more unique than ours. We must stand together or lose our cause."

PUBLIC ALTERNATIVES

Teachers in New York City must complete three years of probation before they receive full job protection or tenure. This spring was Social Studies teacher **Dave Pugh**'s last semester of probation at the Theodore Roosevelt High School. He had received 3 straight years of "satisfactory" ratings. However, Social Studies Assistant Principal John Tornifolio determined that Pugh had suddenly turned into an "unsatisfactory" teacher. Relying on biased classroom observations by Tornifolio, the principal and Bronx H.S. Superintendent Norman Wechsler decided to deny Pugh completion of probation. Principal Frank Fugarino then cancelled a student field trip to an archaeological site that had been organized by Mr. Pugh and other Roosevelt teachers. This school year, Pugh was a founding member of the Peoples Coalition to Take Back Our Schools. It played a critical role in organizing teachers and parents at five public schools to reject the Board of Ed's attempt to hand them over to the for-profit Edison Corporation. Pugh also ran on the Progressive Action Caucus (PAC) slate in this year's union elections, and he helped write "PAC's Vision for the NYC Public Schools." The Board of Ed employs dozens of investigators to monitor groups that are challenging the status quo in the NYC public school system. Thus, it is very likely that the decision to fire Pugh just months before the end of his three year probation was politically motivated. Pugh started receiving "unsatisfactory" ratings of his lessons this spring, shortly after Roosevelt was put on the state list for failing schools. The school then got a new principal, and there was increased pressure on supervisors to give out more "unsatisfactory" ratings. Theodore Roosevelt H.S.: (718) 733-8100. Bronx High Schools main office: (718) 430-6300. Office of the Bronx High Schools, Superintendent, 3000 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461. Email Dave Pugh: dpugh@igc.org. (From Dave Pugh's email posted on education list serve.)

Teachers Vote to Let Parents Decide on Tests, AP, July 7: In its strongest stance against standardized testing, the **National Education Association** has voted to support any legislation that permits parents to let their children skip the tests. The teachers' union has long warned against an over-reliance on standardized tests, which are a cornerstone of President Bush's proposed education plan and a crucial element of many school district programs. Mr. Bush wants the test results to determine how much federal money schools should receive. The measure directs the union's lobbyists to fight mandatory testing requirements on a federal level, and it offers the union's support to state-level delegations in lobbying for laws allowing parents to opt out of testing. While the union does not oppose testing in general, it favors using a variety of indicators to help schools decide whether children are learning. The union also approved a resolution encouraging state and local school officials to use several kinds of assessments when testing whether students have learned. Congress is considering sweeping legislation this year that includes mandatory state testing in reading and math. Every public school student in grades three through eight and with at least one year in high school would be tested. President Bush campaigned on the theme, which has widespread support in the House and Senate. Meanwhile, more school districts are requiring standardized tests as they move toward giving taxpayers a complete picture of student performance. Some tests, known as high-stakes, even determine whether students are promoted or graduate. Nationwide, small groups of parents and students have begun boycotting the tests.

From **McCensored: Student Punished for Criticizing McDonald's** by Hank Hoffman, *In These Times*, July 30, 2001: A guidance counselor had invited McDonald's to make a presentation on job application and interview skills at Stonington High School. Sophomore Tristan Kading, vegetarian and animal rights supporter, volunteered to participate in a mock job interview with the McDonald's representative. When the presentation leader asked Kading to talk about himself, he replied, "I hate large corporations like McDonald's." "That won't get you a job at McDonald's," the representative replied. "Good, I wouldn't want to work at McDonald's," Kading added. "They falsely advertise their french fries as vegetarian." Calling Kading an "embarrassment to the school," a teacher sent him to the principal's office. Kading, fearing suspension, apologized to the McDonald's representative and read an apology over the school's intercom. Students believe it was Kading's politics that got him into trouble. For the past decade, cash-strapped school districts have succumbed to the temptation to accept corporate programming and advertising. But critics say these offers come at the expense of educational goals. "Schools, we hope, are teaching critical thinking skills," says Emily Heath of the San Francisco-based Center for Commercial Free Public Education. "Advertising is antithetical to that. It teaches them to believe whatever is presented to them and to take what your school endorses." "It was not the belief that the student had about McDonald's" that was being punished, Superintendent Michael McKee contends, "but rather the disruption of a presentation of

which there was educational content.”

From **Ednet Briefs**, www.edbriefs.com/sub.html: Philadelphia’s much-debated mandatory school uniform policy was implemented on the first day of classes for city schoolchildren. And while compliance was not 100 percent, the policy’s debut seemed to be largely trouble-free. While many parents said they thought the policy was a cost-saver, others complained that it cost them even more money - like buying their children a second wardrobe. Some of the stiffest resistance came from older students. Still, Eric Braxton, the executive director of the Philadelphia Student Union, which organized protests against uniforms, said many of his group’s members were coming to accept the policy as a frustrating inevitability and moving on. The Board of Education unanimously approved a uniform requirement in May 2000, citing parental support and research that indicated uniforms improved a school’s environment. Supporters believe uniforms help to reduce distractions in class and cut down on conflicts that arise over fashion competition. They also say uniforms promote a more disciplined environment and make class differences less apparent. Rita Giordano.

From **Philadelphia Inquirer**, www.phillynews.com: The Student Press Law Center reports that requests for help from public high school journalists needing free help on a censorship matter rose more than 41 percent last year. According to the Center, 518 public high school student journalists or their advisers contacted them in 2000 for legal help concerning a censorship issue. That number tops the previous high of 367 recorded during 1999, and marks the sixth straight annual increase. Overall, in 2000 the SPLC staff responded to 2,129 requests from student journalists and their advisers seeking legal help, up 31 percent from the 1,624 calls received the previous year. In addition, the Center responded to 462 requests from individuals seeking information only or from news media seeking comment on student press issues. Questions about censorship topped the list of concerns of those seeking legal help from the SPLC (41 percent), followed by libel and privacy law questions (19 percent), freedom of information issues (16 percent) and copyright law questions (11 percent). Since 1974, the Student Press Law Center has been the only national legal assistance agency and information clearinghouse devoted exclusively to protecting and educating the student press about their freedom of expression and freedom of information rights. All legal services are provided to the student media free of charge. For additional information contact: Mark Goodman, Executive Director, 703.807.1904 or via e-mail (director@splc.org).

According to a news release from the **Reason Public Policy Institute (RPPI)**, “Vouchers help, but real school choice is key to improving performance.... Using vouchers to threaten public schools into performing better doesn’t always work as well as intended. Failing schools often improve test scores just enough to maintain funding and avoid vouchers. And in many cases, schools must fail for multiple years before the punitive voucher measure kicks in.... While vouchers have been shown to improve academic performance, the

report recommends combining vouchers with as many school choice options as possible – tax credits, charter schools, and public school choice – so that parents of all economic levels have the opportunity to find the best education possible for their children.” July 13, 2001. 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90034-6064. Tel: (310) 391-2245.

From the **FairTest Examiner**: Wisconsin’s legislative finance committee voted to eliminate the high school graduation test and block its funding, and to discontinue the test. Legislators explained that a major organizing effort led by parents convinced them to halt the use of high-stakes exams for graduation and promotion. One legislator said it was “one of the most significant grass roots efforts” he had ever seen.

The **Paths of Learning Resource Center** has indexed more than 400 resources from publishers in education about schools and alternative education programs based on holistic and learner-centered philosophies in education. It can be found at www.pathsoflearning.net/index2.cfm.

From **Mothering**, Fall 2001: Although scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test have risen, similar gains have failed to appear on most other tests. Reading scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress did not rise in Texas from 1992 to 1998, while the score gap between minority students and whites increased. At least some of the increase seen in scores on the state test can be traced to three factors: intensive test coaching instead of real teaching; classifying more students as “special needs” (and not including them in the results); and much higher grade retention and dropout rates. Texas’s dropout/pushout rates are among the highest in the nation and have risen in reaction to the state’s high-stakes testing program. Of the 15 urban districts in the nation with the worst dropout rates, six are in Texas. Nevertheless, Texas’s testing program is the primary model for President George W. Bush’s plan to radically increase testing and to institute vouchers through a federal education program. In the name of accountability, Bush proposed that, in exchange for receiving federal funds, the states be required to test all public school students in grades 3 to 8 in language arts and math every year. Students in low-scoring schools that fail to improve over three years would be able to use their share of federal funds to attend other public schools, while the schools and districts would face severe sanctions. The threat of federal funding sanctions will make state tests high-stake, even where they now are not. ■

INTERNATIONAL NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

AUSTRALIA

The **Brisbane Independent School (BIS)** has been going for over 30 years against all odds. We are a democratic school with parents managing the school and the children having an optional seat on our executive committee. The children decide the rules, excursions, types of learning experiences and policies for issues such as technology. We engage in contracted learning with the children and value play as an important part of learning. We don't have formal assessment or testing and we have a focus on problem-solving and self-directed learning. We are trying to extend our links as we are currently finding it difficult to balance our philosophical beliefs with accountability demands from our federal government. *Jenni Mansfield*. Email: bis@uq.net.au. Web: <http://bis.primetap.com>.

Unfair Standards Used to Judge Alternative School

Auckland Metropolitan College students and staff say their liberal school should not be condemned on standards designed for mainstream schools.

The Education Review Office (ERO) last month released its eighth damning report on the country's only alternative school, measuring it against national guidelines. Student Charlie Faleni has been part of the "Metro family" for three years and says she does not fit mainstream criteria. "The word that keeps coming up is 'comply'. The criteria fits with mainstream schools. We as students didn't comply with that criteria, that's why we came to this school," says Miss Faleni. Ministry of Education northern area manager Ray Webb says the school uses alternative methods, but it agreed to provide curriculum to national standards. Mr. Webb says a school that has an agreement to provide alternative curriculum would not be subject to mainstream standards. To change the curriculum type to alternative, the ministry would have to shut the state school down and reopen it, he says. The ERO criteria was clear, says Mr. Webb. University of Auckland doctorate student Karen Vaughan is using Auckland Metropolitan College's situation as a case study for her research. "Metro isn't necessarily failing because it fails to meet students needs, but because the definition of what an effective school is can't really be applied here. It simply doesn't fit," says Ms. Vaughan. *Amy Patterson*

BRAZIL

Hello, my name is André Sanchez, I am 16 years old and I live in São Paulo, Brazil. I have studied in four different schools, three of them traditional (two of them traditional catholic schools), and one alternative (not democratic or free, just alternative). I have spent almost 2 years free from school (when I was 13 and 14 years old), and I can say that during those two years, I was able to learn much more than when I was in school, and things that I believe are much more important for me than what I would have learned in school. More important than that, I was happy, and that is something I certainly can't say for the time that I was in school.

But after a lot of pressure and a foolish vision of how things would be, I came back to school (still traditional), only to

remember why I left it in the first place. But "60 Minutes" brought me wonderful news. It aired a story about a school in Framingham, where students were free. A place where students could read a book without being disturbed by teachers demanding attention. A place where rules weren't handed down to the students, in an authoritarian manner, but made by the students, and even better, kept by the students. The name of that school was Sudbury Valley.

Can you imagine what I felt when I discovered that my dream school actually existed? I searched the Internet for related content, and what I found was beyond my wildest expectations. My dream school didn't only exist, but it was one among many. Since then, I am looking for a way to attend a democratic/free school. A month ago, I told my story on the DSM (Discuss Sudbury Model) mailing list, and because of that, I started talking to Jerry (from AERO), who gave me the suggestion to send this, to see if any school would like to have me attending this year, and find a family for me to stay with, etc. My parents don't have enough money to pay for the tuition, and I know no one outside Brazil that I can stay with. Is anyone willing to help me? Thank you for your attention, *André Sanchez*

INDIA

I am an activist/educationist working with traditional artisans in various parts of India. At present I am trying to develop a curriculum for artisans' children based on their indigenous methods in a small village in Kerala. The main issues I have been focusing on are creativity/spirituality/sense of beauty etc. I have been studying the knowledge system of rural/tribal traditional artisans. I think in many cases, especially in India, even alternative education is explored within the western framework. My involvement with rural/tribal artisans and their methods of creating and transferring knowledge have given me a basis for exploring education from a different point of view. On the whole, 'modern educated' Indians are culturally rootless, uncreative, imitating the west on all fronts, and involved in destroying the authentic cultures by what they call 'education,' 'eradication of illiteracy,' 'development,' etc. I studied Engineering and post graduated in product design from National Institute of Design where they still use curriculum developed at Bauhaus, Germany in the 1920s. All the elitist institutions are based on western framework. It is education that is responsible for destroying authentic cultures of the non-western world. I have spent my past 12 years with the rural/tribal artisan communities trying to study these issues and to recover my authenticity, wisdom, true creativity etc. I think there is a world of difference between modern education and indigenous education. Email: jinankb@md4.vsnl.net. Web: www.kumbham.org. *K.B.Jinan*, Aruvacode, Nilambur, 679329. Ph:0493-221544,221568.

ISRAEL

Last year we began a new program, called “A village community as a democratic learning system.” Our project in a small town called Mizpe-ramon is in south Israel in the middle of the Israeli desert. 5500 people live there. The idea is that the whole town becomes a learning area and every learner from 1 to 120 years old would have a personal learning program that he builds himself. This project was a big success this year, and next year another 2 villages want to open the same program. If you have heard of a similar program in the world or have any information, please tell us about it, we want to learn from other people that have tried this direction. *Yaacov Hecht*. yahecht@netvision.net.il

The Hope Flower School

The situation here is getting worse every day after the Israeli re-invasion of Bethlehem. The school is safe, but the area where I live is not at all. A military tank is in front of my home and I can't even leave my room. I am planning to go to the school tomorrow if the clashes outside stop, at least in the morning. The students manage to reach the school in very dangerous circumstances as the Israeli soldiers and tanks are now everywhere in Bethlehem. We had to close the school last week for two days for the safety of the students and they restarted again but I myself could not reach there when they restarted. The most difficult problem that the school is facing now is a financial one as the parents stopped paying the school fees because they lost their work after the Israeli authority imposed the closure since the intifada started. They kept paying for the first few months of the intifada and the school managed to pay the teacher's salaries for the whole last year. But for this year, the situation is becoming worse and most of the parents do not have jobs. So, we are facing a financial problem in paying the teachers' salaries. This is the latest news for now and I will keep you updated. All the best, *Ghada*

TAIWAN

Dear friends, We are the teachers & students from Pei Cheng Autonomous Experimental School, the first free learning middle school ever established in Taipei, Taiwan. Much emphasis of the school has been placed on: Democracy, Love and Freedom. Its goal is to develop in its students a sense of independent learning and enthusiasm in search of the truth. Our school is small but well organized. It was originally promoted solely by a small group of enthusiastic parents & teachers, and since 1998 it has gained the financial support and has been supervised by the Bureau of Education of Taipei City. For the past three years, the general evaluations to the school conducted by the Bureau of Education have given us quite good ratings on developing students' independent thinking and motivating students' academic studies.

Our former mayor, Chen Shui Bien, and his team of workers wholeheartedly advocated the school, while our present mayor, Ma Yin Chiu, has not been supportive. The policy that new students' registration is not being allowed from the year 2001 on, unfortunately, was declared in Jan, 2000 by Ma's government.

Without new students, the school will encounter a major schooling management crisis. The worst of all is those students who stay without new schoolmates are actually mentally labeled or isolated.

After many rounds of tough negotiations with Taipei City government officials, there is still no sign indicating that they will revise the policy. We think it is unwise of Ma Yin Chiu to make a decision like this. It not only inhibits the diversity within the school system in Taiwan but also retards the development of a democratic society. Letters of support can be sent to the following addresses. The school also is circulating a petition. Write to: Director Shi-Jin Lee, Director of Bureau of Education: director@tpedu.tcg.gov.tw Mayor Ma Yin Chiu e-mail: mayor@mail.tcg.gov.tw PEI Cheng Autonomous Experimental School e-mail: ottofrei@yahoo.com.tw

UNITED KINGDOM

What better way to promote or learn about democracy or children's rights in action than by asking the children who are living in the 'free' or 'democratic' schools. **Summerhill** has just created a group of fourteen elected students who are sharing their views and experiences with other children and teachers, by running workshops and presentations with students visiting the school, going to conferences in Europe and visiting other schools. We have set-up an egroup that is not open for membership but is open to e-mails to answer questions, offer advice and help, organise events etc. The group is trying to get its e-mail address promoted on websites that are about democratic education or children's rights. They want to make it as easy as possible for people to find out what it is like to live in a free, democratic community from the viewpoint of the children. Anyone out there doing research or wanting their students to do research why not e-mail the group. *Michael Newman* The address is: democraticmentors@yahoogroups.com ■



Jake, New Summerhill Student

HOME EDUCATION NEWS

The American Homeschool Association has restarted a discussion list networking homeschoolers, librarians, and anyone interested in learning more about the relationship between public libraries and homeschooling families. The AHA is a service organization created in 1995 to network homeschoolers on a national level and to provide news and information about homeschooling. For more information, visit them on the Web: www.American-homeschoolassociation.org.

Home Education Cover Story in TIME Magazine
In TIME magazine's cover story on August 27, 2001, "Is Home Schooling Good For America," the authors presented an extensive and mostly positive report on the growing home schooling movement. The article described different types of home schooling families and support groups throughout the US, and mentioned that home schoolers have a higher scoring average and higher college acceptance rate than non-home schooled students. Throughout the 9 page report are pictures and quotes from home school families, statistic charts, and an extra page on "So You Want to be a Home Schooler . . ." However, the article is also filled with questions and doubts about the quality of the home school education and social experience, and refers negatively to home education as a 'threat' to public education. CNN featured a live interview on August 20 with one of the article's authors, Jodie Morse, as well as a home educating mother and daughter. You can still find the article online at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101010827/index.html>.

New Week-Long Camps for Homeschoolers

The **Five Elements Camp** in Grafton, NY is a new and unique experiential learning program, aimed at homeschooled teens. Basic biology and earth science, and an introduction to principles of permaculture, eastern philosophy, and integral health will be presented through a program of integrated work, readings and discussions. Each camp will focus on one of five elements: Water, Earth, Ether/Space, Air, and Fire, and there will be a large work project at the center of each week focused on that element. Possible projects include watercoursing and constructing a structure over a spring on the land. The camp is located on 250 acres of land in rural eastern New York, and the week-long camps start in April, May, June, September and October of 2002. Limited staff positions are available, and the Five Elements Camp is also looking for interns and volunteers, speakers on related topics, and most especially homeschool students or groups who are interested in coming to the camp. For more information and to sign up, contact Lex Bhagat at icebreaker@disinfo.net.

Study Finds Home Schooled Children Better at Social Skills

By Dawn Rizzoni (CNSNews.com) - Despite a 1999 statement from the National Education Association that, "home schooling cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience," a study released earlier this month shows home-schooled students are actually more socially and academically advanced than their peers.

Patrick Basham, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and author

of the study, said the findings "aren't surprising in intellectual terms, but it does turn the major anecdotal opposition to home schooling - that it produces social retards - on its head." The study by the Fraser Institute, an independent public policy organization based in Vancouver, Canada, focused on home-schooled students in North America. According to the study's findings, the typical home-schooled child is more mature, friendly, happy, thoughtful, competent, and better socialized than students in public or private schools.

They are also less peer-dependent and exhibit "significantly higher" self-esteem, according to the study.

But Janet Bass, a representative of The American Federation of Teachers, said it's impossible to compare home schooling with institutional schools.

"They're two totally different environments," she said, adding that there's no comparison to children in school to children "at home with mommy." As long as the right programs are in place, "you'll get good results" no matter what the environment, Bass said.

The study's findings come as no surprise to those who home school their children. Belinda Mooney, mother of seven and editor of the home schooling website, LearningTreasures.com, has been teaching her children at home for the past 16 years.

"Home schoolers have been surpassing public schools in test scores since the beginning, and ... the fact that they surpass them socially is no surprise, either," said Mooney. "Life itself is about socialization and getting along with others. We do what interests our family and the socialization part comes naturally."

Among other activities, the Mooney children are involved with their church, participate in sports and dance, take part in a weekly reading group, and perform in a gymnastics program. They also belong to a local home school group that provides opportunities for social interaction.

"This month, the children went to a local festival, went on a hayride and pumpkin picking field trip and are going to be going to... a colonial enactment village," Mooney said.

As for the controversy over socialization and schooling, Mooney thinks it's completely overrated.

"I always thought (socialization) was the most ridiculous question anyway," she said. "Who sends their kids to school to be socialized? And who wants the negative socialization skills they learn at school? Not me!"

The study by The Fraser Institute also found that home-schooled children regularly outperform other students academically. Overall test scores for home schoolers were between the 75th and 85th percentiles, while public school students scored in the 50th percentile and private school students' scores ranged from the 65th to 75th percentiles.

Home schoolers also surpass the national average on both of the standard college entrance exams, the ACT and the SAT.

"Almost one quarter of home-schooled students perform one or more grades above their age level peers in public and private schools," said Basham. Indeed, the study cited findings that by Grade 8, the average home-schooled student performs four grade levels above the national average.

Chris Klicka, Senior Counsel for the Home School Legal

Defense Association and author of *Home Schooling: The Right Choice*, said he thinks the study will help combat the myths surrounding socialization and home schoolers.

"Public support is crucial to the advancement and acceptance of the home schooling movement," Klicka said. "People need to be aware of the facts rather than react to their prejudices."

Basham agrees. "If the callers to the radio shows I've been

on ... and the senders of email to me on this subject are representative of the interested public, then this study has the potential to seriously stimulate debate regarding the accuracy of the major negative stereotypes surrounding home schooling," he said. <http://www.cnsnews.com/culture/archive/200110/cul20011023a.html> ■

ALUMNI NEWS



Modern School students as parents

This year's **Modern School Reunion** took place on Saturday September 28th at Rutgers University. The Modern School based on the ideas of Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer, ran from the beginning of the century through 1958, when the last Modern School in the United States closed. The theme of this year's reunion was the effect of a parent who had been a student in the Modern School on the next generation, and many children and grandchildren of former Modern School students were in attendance. Next September's reunion will feature interaction between the former Modern School students, now senior citizens, and students from current democratic schools.

I was a student at the **Modern School** in Lakewood, New Jersey in 1940-41. I often tell my kids and grandchildren about the experience at the School and they stand with mouths agape. Many of us who were in the school at that time were there because of disrupted home situations. My attendance stemmed from the death of a mother when I was 5. Others were refugees from the war in Europe, and some from political persecution – all in all a very interesting mix. Nellie's rules: eat what is in front of you; take vitamins; play the piano; and above all, play chess every day. What else could we do? We didn't know how to read and there was no T.V., which, of course, my grandsons do not believe. I write left-handed because Big Jim explained that if we wrote right-handed the State of New Jersey mandated that he (and we the students) had to follow the Palmer Method of cursive writing.

However, if we wrote left-handed we were excused from that onerous task. So, I switched. It's done me a world of good. I read that there are reunions from time to time. I would be interested in knowing the time and location of the next reunion if one is scheduled. Thank you, *Bernie Feldstein*, feldstein@mediaone.net

Dear Bernie: The **Modern School** Reunions are at Rutgers University every September. This year the reunion was on Saturday September 29th in Brower Commons building. The coordinator is Jon Scott, 200 Sumac Ridge Lane, Altamont, NY 12009. Tel: (518) 861-5544. Email: jscott@atmos.albany.edu.

The **Vershire School** reunion was great. We camped out in front of the Lodge, which used to be the old dining hall and dorms. It was the structural soul of the place. We had a big bonfire made from the scraps of the falling down buildings. It's a beautiful place. Thanks for putting the ad in the journal; it will let people know that the Vershire community is alive and well. We had about 40 folks show up. I'd love to hear about your fabulous summer in Europe and I want to get some more publications. *Jim Lockey*. Email: coby8@msn.com. Web: vershirealumni.org.



Jim Dick talks to Paul Avrich (l) and David Friedman (r)

TEACHERS, JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS

Schools Looking for Teachers:

Join us in collecting/developing a comprehensive K-8 curriculum for an emerging peace school. This school will focus on empowering children through the collective cultivation of sustainable living skills, honest and reciprocal relationships, international awareness, love of learning, positive personal growth, and community. We are currently seeking teachers, administrators, board members, and grant writers. Location: **Eugene, Oregon**. Projected opening: Sept. 2002. Contact: Wendy (541) 684-9024 or Rebecca White (541) 684-4623. 1661 Ferry St. #7 Eugene, Oregon, 97401.

The School Around Us is looking for interns to assist in creating and implementing alternative holistic ways of educating its students. The school founded in 1970 by Marilyn Wentworth is run by parents using the process of consensus. Students when making decisions that affect the whole school also use consensus. Currently there are 25 students from 5 to 14 years of age. Please write to: School Around Us, 281 Log Cabin Rd. Arundel, Maine 04046 Attn: Rebecca or email us at: olivia@adelphia.net

Liberty School of Homesteading and Community is looking for a person with large scale gardening/farming experience and/or passive solar construction skills. Send letters/resume to Arnold Greenberg Liberty School Blue Hill, Maine 04614.

Liberty School's 13th Year program Homesteading and Community is looking for students interested in learning self sufficiency, solar construction and cooperative living skills. This post high school year experience will be on a 22-acre farm from June to April. For more information write Liberty School of Homesteading and Community c/o Liberty School Blue Hill, Maine 04614, grnbrg@downeast.net

There is a position open: Special Education Assistant to a friendly, engaging first grade girl in Victoria Withrow's core group at **Alternative School #1**, a K-8 alternative school with an inclusion model and an experiential learning program. There is also a position open of Special Education Assistant to reticent, eager to learn first grade girl in Lori Goff's core group at AS #1. For more information, contact Christiane Elsbree at Tel: (206) 522-0269. Fax: (206) 522-5595. AS #1, 11530 12th Ave NE, Seattle 98125.

Center for Discovery Learning: Interviewing applicants for one-half time afternoon kindergarten teacher & one-half time (a.m. or p.m.) reading specialist. These two positions may be combined as one full-time position. Also interviewing applicants for full-time secondary teacher. Math skills and technology familiarity a plus. Our teachers teach integrated studies in a 4-6 week block format. Make sure you check out our philosophy, etc at <http://www.cd charter.org> for a fuller understanding of our program. Please fax resume to 303-985-7721 or email to davidhazen@yahoo.com. Interested applicants should submit a cover letter outlining the qualities and experiences that make

you a strong candidate for an experiential, alternative style school, and a statement of your personal philosophy of education, a resume and written references. Mark Inglis, Tech Coordinator E-Mail: minglis@jeffco.k12.co.us Phone: 303-985-7092

Student Recruitment Officer needed for Brockwood Park School. Founded by educator and philosopher J. Krishnamurti, it is an international co-educational boarding school in the southern English countryside. We offer a diverse and personalised programme of study for some 60 students aged 15 to 19, providing an education that encourages good academics, self-understanding, creativity and integrity in a safe and non-competitive environment. Brockwood is looking for a Student Recruitment Officer to formulate and implement a new recruitment strategy. You will require highly developed interpersonal skills and have the ability to work collaboratively. You will be working closely with the School's Director of Administration, but must show initiative and the capacity to work independently. Preferably you will have marketing or recruitment experience and display an excellent command of English and possibly of other languages. You will have good writing and IT skills, be capable of producing promotional material and be able to manage budgets. You will be flexible and creative, with an ability to carry out research related to the recruitment, admission and retention of students. You must be prepared to travel widely. Salary and Living Arrangements: Negotiable. To apply, send a cover letter and your CV to: Director of Administration, Brockwood Park School, Bramdean, Hants, SO24 0LQ, England. For further details call: Bill Taylor + 44 (0) 1962 771 744. Closing Date: 1st February 2002. Interviews: 14th February 02. email: admin@brockwood.org.uk Website: www.brockwood.org.uk

Teachers Looking for Schools:

Returning to the US: A woman with a truly multicultural outlook is looking for a teaching position in an alternative school. After ten years living, working and teaching in Thailand I soon will be moving back to the US with my Thai husband and children. I am certified in Middle and Secondary education and am dedicated to alternative, holistic education. I bring a wealth of compassion, understanding and experience to my students. For the past five years I have run our small business based on promoting world peace through cross-cultural travel by bicycle in Thailand. I completed my student teaching 12 years ago at the Palfrey School in Watertown, Mass. I enjoyed immensely my work with "high-risk" teens assisting them in their preparation for the GED exam in Austin, TX in 1992. **Katie Murray-Tiparos** katie@bikethailand.com

English/Environmental Studies high-school teacher with four years of alternative teaching experience, nine years experience instructing for Outward Bound, and a Masters in Education seeks an alternative, experiential school. Community building, music and art, conflict resolution and outdoor activities are my strong points. Please contact **Susan** at susantinsley@yahoo.com

I am looking for a position as a counselor or teacher. I have 25 years working with adolescents and young adults in a variety of settings. I have training as an Art Therapist and in Analytical Psychology. My primary focus, as a teacher, is student-centered/ holistic education, with expertise in the areas of art, psychology, wood shop, theater/stagecraft, and history. I also have an interest in environmental studies and primitive camping. If you have need of my skills in your program, please contact **Foss Adams**, (309) 879-2232 or email: clearredroad@hotmail.com

I have taught French language and literature in primary and high schools in Italy for nearly 20 years as a French mother-tongue teacher. I am now looking for a new teaching experience in alternative schools, mainly in Europe, but also in the USA and all over the world - either for a brief period or longer ones. I have a French "Maitrise ès Lettres Modernes" (4years) and an Italian "Laurea in Lettere Moderne" (2 years). I also have the Italian State certification and training for primary and high school teaching. My two main hobbies are sports and athletics and also chess playing and would gladly organize such a course. In Italy I am also looking for parents who would like to try and experience homeschooling and alternative schools. Please contact and e-mail Philanfr.@libero.it

My name is **Kay Holzwordt** (holes-wert). I have worked four years in alternative education from grades 7-12 (and two years in regular education). I started two alternative schools in two different states and then taught English, science, history, math, business and electives. I aligned the entire curriculum for both schools, and my students passed state testing in their subject areas. I produced reports to administration on various information required, competed for and received a grant for my school, helped open three more alternative schools similar to the one I was managing, presented to educators how the program was run and discussed its parameters, worked with Title 1 personnel, aligned my school with district curriculum for all subjects areas, and managed aides to help with the schools. I would be happy to discuss my extensive experience with you. I am seeking a position of increasing responsibility with the freedom to make a difference for children. I am in the process of completing my master's degree in alternative education. I have a fairly comprehensive resume that I will send to you upon request. You can reach me at berniers@micron.net or (208) 392-2221.

A talented teacher looking for a position in an alternative school on Long Island, NYC, MA, NH or VT. Enjoy teaching English, social studies and the arts in a middle school setting. Believe in student-centered, democratic process with opportunities for long-term projects and research - both individual and team-driven. Can facilitate and oversee student publications - newspapers, anthologies, literary magazines. Experience teaching/tutoring students with a variety of special needs. Have mentored new teachers, team taught, and trained student teachers and interns. I bring a world view to my teaching since I have traveled to China, Japan, Canada and most of Europe and presently teach ESL to young adults. I am interested in a school where academic freedom and respect for diversity is the lived-philosophy. Have MA in Liberal Studies (SUNY Brockport) with doctoral work in English Education (NYU). Write to **Marcia** at marpoet@aol.com with a

description of your school and the teacher you need.

I am interested in working in a Reggio Emilia inspired early childhood setting. I am trained as an early childhood special educator and am very eager to leave mainstream schools behind me forever. I am passionate about child-directed curricula and the inclusion of children with special needs into regular settings. I am strongly committed to respecting children's individuality and intrinsic love of learning. I believe in, and am experienced in, non-standardized assessment of children. I am completing training in Reggio Emilia pedagogical approaches, which I am incorporating into my current classroom. I am multi-lingual and have taught mostly in multicultural settings. I received my Masters in special ed with an emphasis on multicultural education. I can be contacted at lkline11@hotmail.com or at **Lisa Kline**, 10707 Jamacha Blvd. #218, Spring Valley, Ca 91978.

I am an environmental education teacher who is looking to explore different realms of the education field. For several years I have taught ecology in residential and day programs as well as working in program and curriculum development. In addition I am a ropes course facilitator teaching team building, conflict resolution and communication skills. I am seeking schools or programs to become involved with that center their studies around ecological or cultural sustainability with long-term contact with students. I am particularly interested in schools that use organic agriculture, cultural exposure or wilderness excursions as teaching tools. I have a degree in Environmental Studies and Anthropology with a passion and commitment to making a difference in students' lives. If you have any information that can help me please contact **Jessica** at Leapingbear@hotmail.com.

I am interested in starting an alternative school in the Savannah, GA area. I like the Sudbury model, but am open to suggestion. Anyone interested please contact me at lardas@space.com or 912 653-5749. Thanks, **Nikki Lardas**

New Online Writing Course Offered By Veteran Alternative Educator. Course Description: This course will provide K-12 alternative education teachers, and teachers of at-risk students, the opportunity to write creatively for themselves and provide them the opportunity to develop and share mini lesson plans for use in teaching creative writing to alternative education and/or at risk students. Traditional K-12 teachers will likely benefit by writing creatively and by helping develop and field test mini-lessons. Students in the course will read and respond to an exciting text and course pack of creative fiction and creative nonfiction; develop, share and field test mini lesson plans and comment on the success of the lesson plans. Students in the course will write fiction and/or creative nonfiction using writing prompts in the text and/or from the developed lesson plans. The instructor, **Tom Watson** is a member of the Michigan Alternative Education Organization, and has taught writing to alternative and at risk students for twenty-eight years. He has presented at many state and national conferences and published numerous articles, essays and short stories. He has been a Distance Education instructor for Indiana University since June, 2000. See the web page at: www.indiana.edu/~w505g/index.html or contact Tom Watson at twatson@home.com for more information. ■

CONFERENCES

International European Forum for Freedom in Education, December 14-16. Conference Center, Bogeta, Schleipweg 20, D - 44805 Bochum, Germany. 'Rights and Duties of Parents, Teachers and Pupils at School.' Ph: 49 (0) 2302-699442, effe witten@t-online.de

Celebrate Youth! A Conference on Liberation:
February 15-17, 2002, St. Petersburg, Florida

We are a group of students, teachers, artists, activists, musicians, writers, journalists, filmmakers and farmers. We are kids, and we are fed up with the way that we and our peers are treated. Young people are capable of playing a vital role in our communities. Throughout time, we have participated in progressive political action. However, adults often overlook our potential and fail to support us. Parents, teachers and other adults in our lives ignore and marginalize our views.

WE WANT OUR VOICES BACK! We are locked up for seven or more hours a day, for at least 13 years. We are forced to "learn" things that aren't useful or applicable to our lives and that often aren't even true. We are taught to obey, to keep our opinions to ourselves and to remain silent. We are groomed to enter the workforce. We targeted by corporations that prey on us as lucrative customers.

WE WANT OUR MINDS BACK! We are punished for pursuing our dreams. We are raised and indoctrinated into a culture of racism, sexism, ageism and violence. We are forbidden from being in public during certain hours of the day.

WE WANT OUR FUN BACK! We are taught not to question or challenge our own oppression. We learn only how to operate within and perpetuate authoritative relationships. We want to escape these destructive environments.

WE WANT OUR LIVES BACK! For all of these reasons, we are organizing Celebrate Youth!: A Conference on Liberation, a three-day gathering scheduled for Feb. 15-17 in St. Petersburg, Florida. The conference will incorporate serious discussion, analyses of the problems facing youth today and constructive workshops that equip us with the tools we need to dismantle these oppressive systems in favor of a healthier approach to learning and living. Of course, we will also have fun with activities such as games, movies, picnics, a concert, free-form performances and bike rides through the city. Through this conference, we hope to empower youth and adults from a variety of communities and diverse backgrounds to begin building a society based on freedom and respect, rather than oppression and domination.

the conference in their communities. Please get in touch to let us know what you can do to help. We look forward to working with you to end the oppression and marginalization of youth everywhere.

Lauren compassiontothecore@hotmail.com

Creating the New Education, February 23-24, 2002. Los Angeles, CA, April 6-7, 2002, Newark, NJ International Montessori Society, , havis@erols.com

NCACS 24th Annual National Conference, May 8-12, 2002. Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH. Tel: (888) 771-9171. Email: ncacs1@earthlink.net.

International Democratic Education Conference, August 2002. Sponsored by the Tamariki School, Christchurch, New Zealand. For more information contact the AERO office, or write to Pat Edwards at tamariki@clear.net.nz

IALA CONFERENCE 2002

The International Association of Learning Alternatives (IALA) is pleased to announce that the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP) will host our 32nd conference. It will be held:

JUNE 28 - 30, 2002 IN DULUTH, MN AT THE DECC

THEME: POWERFUL OPTIONS FOR LEARNERS

POSSIBLE PRESENTER TOPICS:

Kids as Resources	Brain-based Learning
Technology	Leadership
Charter Schools	Continuous Improvement
STARS - Youth Organization	Community/Collaboration
Options/Choices	Powerful Learning Experiences

A very rough draft of the conference schedule is:

Thursday night - social

Friday - keynote speaker, lunch, breakouts, dinner

Saturday - c. breakfast, breakouts, lunch & keynote, breakouts, fun networking opportunities (recreational)

Sunday - breakouts, brunch, closing speaker

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for people to speak at the conference, facilitate workshops, donate money and resources and spread the word of

CHANGING SCHOOLS

Since 1973: The Journal of Alternative Education

Edited by Albert Lamb



The new IALA board



Don Glines & Bob Barr at Oregon Conference of IALA

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The Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP) looks forward to everyone coming! Please help by spreading the word about the IALA conference, encouraging people to submit a presenter proposal, and by offering any suggestions or ideas you might have to make this one of the best. . .

IT'S GOING TO BE AWESOME - DULUTH 2002!!!

If you're interested in presenting, or for more information Contact:

PATTI HAASCH
CASS LAKE AREA LEARNING CENTER
208 CENTRAL AVENUE NW
CASS LAKE, MN 56633
PHONE: 218-335-6529 FAX: 218-335-8826
E-MAIL: phaasch@clbs.k12.mn.us

Note: IALA has selected the Education Revolution Magazine as its official publication. AERO has received a grant to cover magazine subscriptions for the first 500 IALA members. If a state gets a bulk membership, AERO will provide a free subscription for every member who asks us for one directly.

Duluth is a wonderful place to visit in the summer. The week after includes the 4th of July and you may want to consider staying over and enjoying the area even more after the conference. There are direct flights into Duluth with Northwest and United Airlines. You can find out more about: Duluth, MN on their website: <http://www.visitduluth.com/>

DECC [Duluth Entertainment Convention Center] is at <http://www.decc.org>

ANNOUNCING FORMATION OF IALA !

On June 30th, 2001. Articles of Incorporation were officially approved by a 28 state delegation of the International Association for Learning Alternatives (IALA) members. The articles put in place a Board of Directors that will over see the workings of the organization. Workings that will include the hiring of an Executive Director, the formation of standing committees such as, Conference Committee, Legislative Committee, Research committee etc., and establishment of an ongoing fund raising, planning and decision making group furthering the cause of learning alternatives and education options. This group under various names has produced 30 annual conferences since the 1970s.

To further the cause we are asking interested parties to become members in the organization by contributing \$20 for individual membership. If you are a member of a state association for alternative schools you may wish to persuade your association to contribute a state membership by approving such a motion. State membership fee is \$10 per member. If you are a student you may become a member for \$10. If you would like to receive the association publication "Changing Schools" (currently published as a supplement to Education Revolution Journal) you may add an additional \$10 to your check. You might also consider giving a gift if you know of and support the efforts of this group.

Make check payable to IALA and mail to:

David Bly
Alternative Learning Center
1651 Jefferson Parkway
Northfield, MN 55057

Use the form below to join:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
City _____ ST _____
ZIP _____

Individual membership (\$20.00) _____

Student membership (\$10.00) _____

Changing Schools-Education Revolution subscription
(\$10.00) _____ Gift _____
Total _____

The "Traveling Home-Schooler" Looks Back

Jenifer Goldman

Looking back on yourself just how you were as a child is a very insightful thing to do. I don't really mean remembering how it was or being nostalgic, not that those don't have their places as well, but more interesting than

that is to look at an actual work of art or writing, which shows how you thought of yourself. In my case I have the chance to look at a very in-depth story where I tell exactly who I thought I was and what made me that person. This comes in the form of "My Life As A Traveling Home-Schooler," the book from which excerpts were published in the spring 2001 issue of this magazine.



Looking back, the thing I recognize above all as the most valuable lesson that I gained during my home schooling is the ability to act on my passion for knowledge. During this short period of my life I really learned how to learn. Being an independent learner is the single driving force that got me through my return to public education, my continuation to college education, and is still one of my most important assets as a working adult. During home schooling much more than with public school you have the chance to learn from real life experiences.

Unfortunately not many home-schoolers have the opportunity that I did to travel the country, but there are countless real life educational opportunities close to home as well. For me the idea of having to learn math in a classroom was a dreadful bore and I couldn't see the necessity of it. However, if you go on a regular food-shopping trip and you have a budget to work with, or go to a restaurant and it comes time to figure out the tip, the need for routine math becomes instantly apparent.

As a child, I had a great passion for science and I loved animals, yet somehow looking at a biology textbook while listening to a teacher rattle on about the life cycle or the classifications of living things just doesn't hold the same interest as going to a zoo or taking a nature walk. When you are immersed in something in daily life, the excitement and necessity

of education becomes overwhelmingly clear.

I was incredibly fortunate in that I had my uncle Jerry Mintz who was willing to take me with him all over the country to meet people and explore different surroundings. I had some difficulty back then relating to other people, though no one would ever say that this is one of my faults today. I attribute that in large part to the number of different kinds of people I had the occasion to associate with during my travels. I know that oftentimes people are concerned with the “lack of socialization” that is considered by many to be an unavoidable fault of the home schooling option; I can assure you that this is not necessarily the case. I learned more about healthy socialization with members of my community from home schooling than would have been possible in a public school environment.

My surroundings did not teach me that it is important to be like everyone else, they did not show me that fashion is more important than intellect and commonsense, and most importantly I was taught that being yourself is the best thing you can be. These insights came to me in less than one year of home schooling, and they will benefit me eternally.

In the beginning of sixth grade I faced one of my hardest challenges, I had to go back into the public school system. For the past year I had tasted freedom, I knew what was out there to be discovered and explored, and I did not want to be restricted to a non-flexible curriculum. I made some good friends, but I couldn't bring myself to work with the system. I struggled through sixth and seventh grade without very much enthusiasm, and then decided to move to Massachusetts to live with my father. I thought that a different home environment and a new group of classmates and teachers might be the key. My father has always been an important figure in my quest for knowledge and back then I believe that I thought he knew everything. We went to museums, aquariums, and all variety of other fun and educational places.

Unfortunately, I found the school system there to be substantially worse than it had been back on Long Island. I couldn't relate to the kinds of people I was surrounded by and my teachers had an extreme lack of insight into the minds of their students. We talked with some people there about an alternative high school program that sounded promising. We visited it and expressed interest. It was a very small program that was part of the public high school, the size was it's main appeal, but it was also a problem because they did not have any openings at the time. So I went back to New York to live with my mother and stepfather again and to start high school.

Jenifer Goldman is now 22 years old and is a licensed veterinary technician. She works as a supervisor and researcher in a zoological laboratory in Denver ■

Who was Makiguchi?

Brian Covert

To introduce Dayle Bethel's article about the great Japanese educator, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, we will quote from a short profile of the man recently written by Brian Covert, which originally appeared in the KnoK News.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was born into poverty in a rural village in Niigata Prefecture, northern Japan, in 1871 (three years after the Meiji-era opening of Japan had begun). As a child he was abandoned first by his father, then his mother, and was brought up mostly by relatives. As a young man he moved to Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, where he continued his studies and became a schoolteacher, specializing in geography. He married Kuma Makiguchi, a distant cousin, and they would go on to have eight children in all.

Makiguchi and his family eventually moved down south to the capital city of Tokyo, and he worked as a teacher and principal at several primary schools. Makiguchi apparently was a thorn in the side of school administrators, teachers and parents alike, because of his rejection of factory-type public education and his unwavering faith in the natural abilities of learning among children.

He published his most famous work, “Jinsei Chirigaku” (A Geography of Human Life), in 1903 and he had hoped it would serve as a new, more humanistic guide for Japanese teachers in the area of childhood learning. He was later forced to retire from the education field, and devoted himself to Buddhism, in particular his own ethics philosophy of “creating values” in society.

As World War II raged on, Makiguchi found himself imprisoned in 1943 by the Fascism-adherent military authorities in Japan — not for his educational beliefs, ironically, but because he and other scholars of the day refused to recognize the state-imposed version of Japan's indigenous Shinto religion. By the time he was serving his wartime prison sentence, Makiguchi had outlived five of his own eight children.

Makiguchi himself died of malnutrition in Tokyo's Sugamo Prison in 1944, a year before Japan's surrender in the war. He was 73 years old.

Having died behind bars, Makiguchi was never to see the direction Japan's educational system would take: Just two years after the end of the war, under pressure from the U.S. occupation forces, the Japanese government adopted in March 1947 the “Kyoiku Kihon

Ho" (Fundamental Law of Education), which essentially took education out of the divine realm of the Japanese emperor and placed it in the hands of the Japanese public. Around the same time, Japan also adopted the "Gakko Kyoiku Ho" (School Education Law), which set up, for better or worse, an "American-style" 6-3-3 structure of compulsory public education. These two laws remain, to this day, the pillars of Japan's education system — and both laws continue to be sources of heated controversy in Japanese society.

Saving Our Children: A Japanese Approach

Dayle Bethel

An educational revolution is underway in the world. This revolution is beginning to liberate thousands of children and young people in many different countries from the oppressive, personality-stifling tyranny and mind-numbing boredom of industrial capitalism's factory schools.

The fascinating thing to note about this revolution is that it is emerging in country after country spontaneously, without any one source of leadership, without planning, without design, and largely without notice by the general public. Spurred by rapidly growing homeschooling movements, alternative schools and other self-learning initiatives, this revolution in education is a microcosm of the larger progressive, alternative and transformational movements that are emerging worldwide.

The roots of the presently accelerating revolution in education can be traced back to a long line of dissident educators, most important of whom, for our purposes, are several who lived and worked during the first half of the 20th century, particularly John Dewey, Lewis Mumford, Mahatma Gandhi, Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori. In a very real sense, today's educational revolutionaries stand on the shoulders of these early 20th-century philosopher/educator/practitioners.

In this article, I would like to discuss the contribution of another of these 20th-century revolutionary educators who is much less well-known. I refer to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), a Japanese educator/geographer who lived and worked in Japan during the first four decades of the 20th century. During the last quarter of the century, Makiguchi's ideas, educational proposals and practical experiments have joined with the rich legacy of Dewey, Gandhi and others to become a part of a swelling global stream of revolutionary ideas and practices in human

learning that is helping to transform educational systems in nearly every country in the world.

Makiguchi's writings provide a unique perception of industrial society from the viewpoint of one who lived and worked in Japan during the early years of the 20th century. Makiguchi placed great hope in modernization. He shared the high expectations of industrialism and the potential abundance it promised, which was prevalent throughout much of the world at that time. However, like his fellow dissident educators in other cultures around the world, Makiguchi foresaw the dangers and tragic consequences of the social and educational policies taking shape in industrial societies.

He warned against tendencies he observed developing in Japan: reckless disregard for the environment, the sacrifice of traditional values in pursuit of profits, and the isolating of children and young people day after day in schools - severing their ties with the natural environment as well as with their families and communities and forcing them to learn masses of fragmented, unrelated facts. It was this development in Japan of the American system of factory schools which especially concerned him.

Makiguchi feared that the ultimate outcome of these imported values and policies would be disastrous for Japan, and he worked tirelessly during the first four decades of the century, both through education and through his writing, in formulating and promoting what he believed was a more constructive and sustainable approach to industrial development. The key element in creating such a society would be, he believed, the developing of what he called a "value-creating" educational system based on scientific principles of human learning and oriented to local communities and their immediate environments.

Learning Through Living

The Earth, for Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, was a miracle. Life was a miracle, and he saw life vibrating and pulsating through all phenomena. A major goal which began to motivate him early in his professional career was to call his peers, particularly young people, to an awareness of and appreciation for the Earth and for the life pulsating through it. In his first major writing, "A Geography of Human Life" (first published as "Jinsei Chirigaku" in 1903), Makiguchi describes what for him was the ultimate question:

"How, then, can we observe our surroundings? How can we make contact with the earth? We are born of the earth; we are inspired by the earth; we die on the earth; the earth is our home."

In our interaction with our environment, Makiguchi believed we should "regard people, animals, trees, rivers, rocks, or stones in the same light as ourselves and realize that we have much in common with them all. Such interaction causes us to feel, if not consciously think, 'if I were in their (or its) place, what would I feel...or do?' Sympathetic interactions occur, therefore,

when you regard or feel another person or object that you are in contact with as a part of yourself or as one of your kind. You share experience with that person or object and are able to place yourself in the position of that person or object."

He also believed that "it is our nature as human beings to form societies. No one can live totally alone. It is through association in society that we can provide not only for our basic needs and security, but for everything that makes our lives fulfilling and rewarding. This realization leads to the universalization of sympathetic feelings which were initially toward a specific individual or object. Growing awareness of our indebtedness to our society gives rise to feelings of appreciation and a sense of social responsibility within us. Beginning in our very personal relationships...our sympathetic concern and appreciation expands to include the larger society and, ultimately, the whole world."

Perhaps more than any thing else, it was this reverence for nature, this sense of wonder and appreciation for life, this sense of being intimately connected with both our natural and social environments, that Makiguchi longed to communicate to his students and fellow beings. The development of such awareness and appreciation upon the part of human beings was, he believed, of crucial importance both for nature's sake and for the development of persons of moral character.

Makiguchi was convinced that the development of a sense of interdependence and interrelatedness with the natural world, of which he perceived humans a part, is a central aspect of what it means to be a human being. Not only is this holistic orientation the most pervasive theme of "A Geography of Human Life," it became the central theme of Makiguchi's own life:

"Being aware of the rich variety of phenomena that influence my life, I cannot help thinking of the way the whole earth operates. I look around and, although my eyes can reach only a few kilometers in any direction, my heart and mind is filled with excitement and wonder and curiosity about the earth and about the relationship between the earth and our lives on the earth. I begin to realize that if we would seek a deeper understanding of this relationship, we must prepare ourselves to make observations and inquiries into several different aspects of the planet, such as its topography, dimensions, movements, and structure."

Such was Makiguchi's invitation to young people in particular, and to all his contemporaries in general, to join him in a journey to explore the wonders of the Earth and life born of the Earth. "A Geography of Human Life" is something like a 'ship's log' or diary of that journey. But it was also intended as a handbook or travel guide for others who are motivated to take the journey themselves.

Before embarking on this journey of discovery, Makiguchi explained that the method of inquiry to be used was that of participant observation. But what was to be the scope of that observation?

"I arrived at a conviction that the natural beginning point of understanding the world we live in and our relationship to it is that community of persons, land, and culture which gave us birth; that community, in fact, which gave us our very lives and started us on the path toward becoming the persons we are. In other words, that community which has given us our rootedness as human beings. The importance of this rootedness and personal identity given us by our native cultural community, our homeland, can scarcely be overemphasized."

"If we think seriously about it," he went on to say, "we can see that every aspect of this universe can be observed in this small area of our homeland. And because our homeland is the place where we live, where we walk, where we see and hear and gain impressions, it is possible for us to observe all these things directly. Thus, it is possible for us to explain the general nature of complex phenomena anywhere in the world through use of examples which we can find in abundance even in the most remote village or hamlet."

Philosophy of Learning

Makiguchi often observed and spoke out strongly on what he saw as the life-threatening damage being done to children's lives and personalities in the Japanese schools of his day:

"The detrimental effects of force-feeding a small child can be easily seen because of the small body's inability to metabolize more than it can digest. The excessive bulk passes through the child's system, an undigested waste. Or worse, it may lodge in the digestive tract, slowly putrefying and poisoning the whole system. Unfortunately, the effects of psychological toxification in children caused by the forced learning of masses of unintelligible information are not immediately visible. Consequently, the detrimental effect of this poisoning process in children's lives is not recognized. The situation is serious, but when we search for the causes of the problem, we are faced with the paradox that teachers and parents alike see themselves as providing for the future well-being of the children even though they make them miserable in the process."

"The aim of education," Makiguchi stressed, "is not to transfer knowledge; it is to guide the learning process, to put responsibility for study into the students' own hands. It is not the piecemeal merchandising of information; it is the provision of keys that will allow people to unlock the vault of knowledge on their own. It does not consist in pilfering the intellectual property amassed by others through no additional effort of one's own; it would rather place people on their own path of discovery and invention. The words have been resounding in the ears of educators like ourselves since the days of [Czech

theologian/educator J.A.] Comenius and [Swiss educational reformer Johann] Pestalozzi, but they have yet to be put into real practice.

"Thus, if one possesses the keys to unlock the vault of knowledge, it becomes possible to obtain for oneself all the learning one will ever need in life without having to memorize endless volumes of scholarship....There is no reason to overload our lives with mountains of useless and trivial information that we may never need."

Makiguchi believed that the indirect, secondhand educational system that had developed in Japan was the height of folly. Primarily a product of implantation from Western cultures, that system of education, he charged, confined learners to classrooms and forced them to go through a meaningless routine of memorizing and forgetting, memorizing, forgetting, and on and on. Furthermore, it severed the learners' ties with the natural systems making up their environment. Makiguchi, writing in the early decades of the 20th century, described the effects of the development of modern schools in Japan as follows:

"In the days before there were schools, the prevailing method of guiding young people to the proper roles in the general scheme of life was an extended home life, whereby one apprenticed at the family trade throughout one's formative years, with this training supplemented by things learned from the local community. Then came the Meiji period (1868-1912) with its modern education and the spread of schools....Everyone was taken by the hand and dragged off to schools, and soon the other two schemes of learning fell into disuse. This was the age of the school reigning unchallenged and omnipotent.

"Only in recent years have we seen the grave error of our ways and tried to fill in the gap with various kinds of adjunct education and youth groups for extracurricular activity....From this point on, school education must be aware of its own share of the educational role....It must cooperate with the other two areas of education, the home and the community, each with its own expertise....These three areas of education must link together in an orderly system of mutual complementarity."

To accomplish this kind of community-based system of education, Makiguchi proposed what he called a "half-day school" system, from elementary schooling to the university, which would cut back on ill-managed education that was wasting valuable work-learning time. If we were to return to the other two areas of education much of their pre-modern territory in overall life guidance, he claimed, only the remainder would need to be taught in schools - and in a half day at that. This, he believed, would at once prove more efficient, and would create an organic bond with the other two areas.

In a marvelous statement summing up the fundamental purpose of half-day schooling, Makiguchi wrote that "study is not seen as a preparation for living, but rather study takes place while living, and living

takes place in the midst of study. Study and actual living are seen as more than parallels; they inform one another intercontextually, study-in-living and living-in-study, throughout one's whole life. In this sense, it is not the better economic budgeting of school programs but the instilling of joy and appreciation for work that becomes the main focus of the proposed changes."

Makiguchi's "A Geography of Human Life" highlights a clash between two different kinds of society based on radically different world views and sets of values. Makiguchi offered his vision of a good society, which could nurture good, happy persons, as a model for the development of an industrial system in Japan. At the time he was writing "A Geography of Human Life," the American version of the Western model of industrialism was sweeping the Earth. The contrast between that type of industrialism and the type that Makiguchi proposed is sharp and clear. It is especially clear in the respective views of the two models toward nature. A basic tenet of the American model, what Alvin Toffler labels 'indust reality,' is that "nature is an object waiting to be exploited."

For Makiguchi, on the other hand, to be human meant to live in harmony with the Earth. To live as a human being meant to love and understand and appreciate the Earth: "It is through our spiritual interaction with the earth that the characteristics which we think of as truly human are ignited and nurtured within us."

Makiguchi envisioned an industrial society developing in Japan upon a basis of interdependence and interconnectedness between human beings and the Earth. It was to the realization of such a society that he directed his life and his teaching.

Efforts at Implementation

Makiguchi's professional life spanned four decades, from 1900 to 1930. During most of that time, he served as a teacher and principal of elementary schools in various parts of Japan, seeking, to the extent possible given the rigidity of the educational system, to experiment in implementing his educational ideas. The results of these experiments were impressive and Makiguchi received strong support and encouragement from some of his former students and teachers who taught under him.

He was supported also - and his educational ideas endorsed - by many prominent persons in Japanese society, including Tsuyoshi Inukai, prime minister of Japan during the early 1930s. However, with but a few notable exceptions, Japanese academics and educational administrators bitterly denounced Makiguchi as a rabble-rouser and troublemaker, and labeled his ideas and proposed educational reforms as unworkable nonsense. These sentiments within the educational establishment, together with the increasing influence of the military in Japanese society, led to

Makiguchi's forced retirement from his post as a primary school principal, and thus to the "official" end of his long career as an educator.

The final blow came with the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai in 1932 by military elements. After that, Makiguchi gave up trying to improve Japanese education and society through educational channels, and turned his energy and convictions in other directions.

But while Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's ideas and his vision of an industrial society based on love and respect for the environment, and of holistic learning occurring within nature and community, were rejected by Japanese society in his lifetime, his ideas and proposals have played - and are continuing to play - a significant role in creating the worldwide revolution in education and society we are now witnessing.

Dayle Bethel (dbethel@aloha.net) is a holistic educator and author of several books on alternative learning, including "Makiguchi - The Value Creator" (Weatherhill, 1971). He is also a contributor to the recently published book "Creating Learning Communities" (Foundation for Educational Renewal, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's work "Jinsei Chirigaku" (A Geography of Human Life) from Japanese into English, and the book is due to be published by the San Francisco-based Caddo Gap Press in 2002. Dayle and his wife, Miyoko, make their home between Kyoto, Japan and Honolulu, Hawaii. 2000). He has overseen and edited the translation of James Friis-Lawrence, Summerhill School student

Democracy in Schools

In September a conference of Education Ministers from around the world met at Geneva under the auspices of UNESCO's International Conference on Education. A group from Summerhill attended the conference and one of their number, James Friis-Lawrence, having listened to the delegates speak, asked the organisers, the International Bureau of Education, if he could contribute. James was the only young person to speak at this conference

In his speech James asked for support to prevent the closure of democratic schools. There are at least three schools currently threatened with closure around the world: Hope Flowers School in Bethlehem has had its entrance blockaded by the army; the Pei Cheng Autonomous Experimental School in Taipei, Taiwan has been refused permission by the local Mayor to enroll new students; and Auckland Metropolitan College is under threat due to an inspection that failed to recognise its alternative nature. James' words:

I am a student studying out of personal choice at Summerhill School, a democratic boarding school in

England. I have come here to speak of democracy in schools and its relevance when learning about citizenship, and more importantly the individual, or should I say the individual child.

At my school, pupils and teachers live together in a democratic community, where we have an equal vote and an equal say. It is an international school, with pupils from Asia, The Middle East, Europe and the North America. We all learn tolerance and respect through living together, and accept each other's cultural and ethical backgrounds. Using this, I have been elected as school ombudsmen, that is, the person who is responsible for solving disagreements between all members of the school - teachers and pupils - using peaceful dialogue, patience and understanding. I have been elected every term for three and a half years.

Participating in community democracy has given me: A sense of responsibility for others; The skills needed for peaceful resolutions in disputes; A way of taking part in the creation and use of law and justice; And space to understand who I am and what I am to the world. In this way I am able to participate as a citizen of the world.

As Jacques Delors said in the report, 'Learning - The Treasure Within': "UNESCO was founded, based upon the hope for a world that is a better place to live in." I share that hope, and like to think that every child will have the opportunity to learn what I am learning, for these values that I hold are evident in the spirit of this conference.

A number of these schools already exist in many countries, such as: New Zealand, Japan, The United States, Thailand, The Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Portugal, France, Germany, Denmark, Israel and Palestine. It is my hope that such schools will prosper and be successfully founded in other countries as well. I and many other pupils attending these schools have been lucky in what we have experienced, but why only us? Despite the fact that Summerhill and schools like it correspond so precisely to what you are recommending here, some of them are facing the threat of closure.

These schools may close and need your support, as the hopes of this conference are in these schools. All that I ask is that these schools are recognized, and have a chance to prosper. In this way you can show the world that using democracy, participation and respect for children's rights, you help form the strong individual citizen, but only if you take action and do not make these simply the words appearing in the final report of a conference."

Relevant web sites:

Information about the International Conference on Education can be found at:
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/46english/46menue.htm>

Information about Pei Cheng Autonomous
Experimental School can be found at:
http://www.first-ask.de/pei_cheng/

Information about Auckland Metropolitan College,
[http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/index/
0,1008,930214a1501,FF.html](http://www.stuff.co.nz/inl/index/0,1008,930214a1501,FF.html)

Information about Summerhill School:
<http://www.s-hill.demon.co.uk> ■

John Gatto: A Radically Uncivil Society

John Gatto interviewed
on WBAI
by Utrice Leeds and Jerry
Mintz

Utrice : Let's now be joined by John Gatto. He is the author of several books including "Dumbing Us Down." He twice was teacher of the year in New York State, which is no small feat. Thank you John Gatto for being with us.

John: Glad to be aboard. Is that the founder of Shaker Mountain School next to you?

Jerry : Yea, that's me. Hi John.

John: Hi Jerry.

Utrice : So what do you know as a teacher, having twice won this coveted award, that other teachers don't know?

John: I don't know if I would frame the question that way. I think we generally understand, all of us really, how children learn. A century of layering one expert pronouncement over another, of government intervention in a punitive sense against people who deviate, of true alternatives (before homeschooling) really only being available to people who could afford the time and the extra money. I think all of that has intimidated an entire population, and, if you will, brainwashed people into forgetting what they know

very well.

I heard you for about 15 minutes before you had me on and I think it was kind of Jerry to say that these are mistakes being made, but I don't think they are at all. I'm sure that a century - or two centuries - ago pedagogy was understood inside out; if not, where would we have created the incredible group of men called Founding Fathers, none of whom were formally educated.

Jerry : I think people may be interested in knowing a little bit about what you did in New York City with the students in your school. Maybe you could just give a little bit about this group of kids and what you did with them.

John: I started the first year out of exquisite boredom and probably out of a belief that the job wasn't worth having in any case, although contact with the kids was very valuable. I began to test for myself the assumptions - that I had learned at Cornell and Columbia, two Ivy League colleges - that people fall into a bell curve and you can predict behavior and accomplishment largely, and that it's a cruelty to inflict intellectual training on somebody who falls in the middle of the bell or below. I began to toy with that by running risks, by breaking laws, and by setting kids free inside the school building. I don't want to go into the techniques, although I would be happy to at another time.

In any case when we had fully explored the resources that are in the building - which are much, much greater than most teachers were aware because they get their program card and they do their best to put in their 42-minute stints everyday and then they go home. But I used the building as a piece of living curriculum and its resources - the furnace room, the roof, all the classrooms on different grades - became sort of sociological masses that could be analyzed by individual kids. I could not exhaust the kids' ability to adapt to these much more challenging assignments. So I said, well, I'll just have to break more laws and use the neighborhood.

Now, your listeners will be very familiar with the neighborhood that I used, it probably starts at 68th Street and Broadway and goes to Columbia University between the River and Central Park West. I said this will be our school, and at any moment, no matter who lives in that neighborhood, what activity's going on, what event, I reserve the right to change the school rules on time and place.

Jerry : So you actually sent these kids out of the school building?

John: Constantly. I always, always, made personal contact with every parent first and I told them what I planned and if they would rather the kids stay in there'd be much smaller class and I intend to run it like a Cornell seminar so they'll certainly get whatever my best is, whether you agree with that system or not. I found most years 100% of the parents were very cooperative and they were very enthusiastic and furthermore what I learned was that once you open the door to those resources – let's say an average public school teacher has 120 students a day, that's roughly 240 parents who are active in the community – there's an endless flood of resources that begin to appear as they take a partnership for all of this.

Now, I did tell them that if the school found out about this before it was well underway that it was out of the school authority's hands. No principal in the United States has any power at all, they have a negative to say no and they're expected to exercise it, but they have utterly no wiggle room about innovating. Nor does any superintendent in the United States in spite of the garbage that the newspapers crank out every couple of years. You can define yourself as a guerilla schoolteacher, as I did, or even as a guerilla principal or superintendent, but in doing so you have terminated your career possibilities.

The system has no sympathy with someone who deviates from the routines and produces measurably better results. And the absolute proof of that is Hymie Escalante who deviated radically from the routines. He went back to a form of teaching that's 100 years old, and produced the highest performing children in advanced calculus in the United States, except for two private schools, the highest in California, including the elite schools.

Jerry : And almost all those kids were inner-city Hispanic kids.

John: Almost all the kids were Hispanic and ghetto blacks from the Los Angeles area and Hymie Escalante was a Peruvian immigrant. It's true that people who don't have much familiarity with the Latino community might say they all spoke Spanish, but there's no common bond of sympathy between a Peruvian and a Mexican immigrant whose father's picking corn in the field.

Escalante transformed the school; if he had done it for one student a year, there would be a statue in front of Los Angeles City Hall. Because he did it with the majority of his classes year after year, he was hounded, persecuted, and finally driven from his school and he landed in Sacramento where he taught a few years and then retired.

Jerry : This is the same guy they made the same movie about, "Stand and Deliver," right?

John: This is the same guy that when I spoke at United Technologies in Hartford, Connecticut, and I didn't speak to the riff-raff, I spoke to the controllers of each of the 32 operating divisions - they started the meeting off by showing a film about Escalante (excerpts from the "Stand and Deliver" film) as an example of what was possible. Not a single one of those august executives was aware that as they were showing the film, Escalante had already been fatally sabotaged by calls from the school administration to parents telling them they were crazy to put them in that crazy man's class, even after a performance which I think brings the entire mathematics establishment into question and to tremendous shame, if a Peruvian immigrant can produce these results, not by innate genius, but by using a system of math teaching over 100 years old.

Utrice : We've been talking very regularly on this program about education and the Byzantine Empire at 110 Livingston Street known as the Board of Education. You're very familiar with the...

John: Intimately...

Utrice : ...bureaucracy and you've described how you had to operate essentially as a renegade within the system to get any meaningful education done.

John: There is no other way. For anyone.

Utrice : What should the Board of Education be like, what should it function as, if it is to be effective, if it is to deliver the constitutional mandate to which it says it's committed, and that is deliver a quality and meaningful education to 1.2 million children?

John: You're describing a political impossibility for very, very pragmatic reasons. Systematic schooling, institutional schooling is one of the largest distribution mechanisms in the world. It's certainly the largest in the American economy, much larger than the Defense Department, for example. Each politician depends on some favor or other, at least not hostility, from this establishment.

What's usually fronted as the villains in the piece are the teachers unions, and that's so pathetically off base, even though I don't have a heck of a lot of sympathy for the teachers unions. They're not the villains in the piece. The villains in the piece are the people who get the contracts for the textbooks – big publishing houses like Simon and Schuster – people who get the contract for desks, for chalk, people who are able to place their

relatives into administrative positions, we're talking about something that could not be unthreaded by the city of New York.

There are local hopes and there are personal hopes that are very alive, but systematic hopes don't exist. This has become a jobs project and a contract-letting mechanism and in spite of the Fourth of July rhetoric, any teacher, any teacher who brings in a romantic idea about children's capabilities to the public attention is instantly marginalized, harassed, and ostracized.

It's okay inside a building on parent's night for that, or for someone even to get a local reputation as a good teacher. It's not possible to be a good teacher since I would submit to you both that the civility - which doesn't exist in public schools - is quite as important as math or science or English.

We have a radically uncivil society; one of the major forges of that has to be public schooling. It deliberately violates fundamental human rights. You can't urinate when your bladder calls. I know that this has been a semi-joke for 50 or 100 years; but the truth is, there is no private school of reputation in the country that imposes those restrictions. You wouldn't find a boy at St. Paul's or Groton or Choate denied the right to vent his bladder. I pick that partly because of the ridiculousness of it, but we can multiply this.

If you've been a parent, or even if you've just hung around kids: what does it teach somebody when they're never allowed to complete a project of any complexity or magnitude? When a bell rings, they move. Is that not a classic behavioral training mechanism for dogs and white mice? Of course it is! And it's not an accident that it is.

Have Meditation Bench – Will Travel

Helping Develop an International Educational Community

Peter Christopher

In late July I left my home in Vermont for a month of traveling. The theme: alternative schools. The destinations: England and Russia. First stop: Heathrow airport, London.

Jerry Mintz (Director of AERO) and I first touched down in Heathrow at the end of July, and quickly

managed to locate Stephen Sanford, a charming high school student from Montana who traveled with us. After seeing all of London's greatest sites in one day, our entourage headed west. First real stop: Albert Lamb's. Albert is an alumnus of Summerhill School and an editor of the magazine *The Education Revolution*. At Albert's, discussion centered around future directions for AERO, organic gardening in England vs. Vermont, and whether 'axer' is a legitimate scrabble word.



Armed with my folding meditation bench, and guided by Albert's wife Popsy (also a Summerhill alumn) we then proceeded to hunt aliens in several English crop circles. All we found was barley, oats, oilseed rape (source of canola oil), and wheat. Notably, the crops were often laid down in very interesting patterns "as seen on TV." The force was with us. .

Following these adventures in the English countryside, it was on to Birmingham to meet with homeschooling activists - then to Summerhill School. Finally, after years of anticipation, our taxi turned into the driveway where 'Summerhill School' was printed in colorful tilework on a low brick wall. In an attempt to dampen our spirits, rain threatened. However, miraculously, this was the only day it rained on us in England the entire trip - otherwise it was always sunny and pleasant.

It was about ten years ago when I first read the book 'Summerhill' by the school's founder A.S. Neill. Here I was standing in the doorways, in the halls, in the cafeteria, where students and teachers had been running a democratic school for almost a century - a school which has inspired thousands of schools around the world, and which has been a significant presence throughout my own education. When we arrived, the 80th reunion was well underway. There were one or two hundred smiling people; ample skateboards, chess

boards, bulletin boards; alumni from all over the world – especially England, Japan, Germany, and the U.S.; and hardly any activities planned. There were current students and alumns. There were parents, former parents, teachers, and former teachers. There were even a few alumns who had been at the school around the time of the Second World War, when the school had been operating out of Wales rather than the precarious coastal village in southeast England where it has otherwise existed.

The Summerhill reunion was mostly a time for friends to hang out, with a toast to the 80th anniversary thrown in one night. The truth is that, though I met a few interesting folks there, I really didn't fit in to the social atmosphere. I certainly hadn't been invited, and I was only allowed because I am working with Jerry, the international networking guru of alternative education. One day, Jerry was able to get us access to an internet computer at Summerhill, where I updated the web page for one of AERO's new initiatives, Action Groups, designed to coordinate the formation of new schools and homeschooling resource centers (see educationrevolution.org for more details on Action Groups).

The highpoint of the event for me was at one of the few organized meetings. Zoe Readhead is the current director of the school and daughter of A.S. Neill. Together with other members of the community, she described the past few years of intense scrutiny from the department of education relating to Summerhill's practice of not requiring students to attend classes. After many years of ever-increasing tension, in the past two years a dramatic court case was brought before the high court in London, to determine the fate of Summerhill. Parents, students, administration, and alumni banded together and engineered a remarkable victory, enlisting the help of an extremely qualified legal defense team as well as broad political support from elected officials and homeschoolers nationwide. At one point, the entire school was in London having a school meeting in the high court chamber to determine how to respond to an offer from the state to drop most charges and grant the school increased autonomy. Apparently, that offer was accepted. Perhaps Summerhill shall always shine on as the beacon it has become. I brought back an A.S. Neill mug: "I'd rather have Summerhill produce a happy street sweeper than a neurotic prime minister." (To learn more about Summerhill, read Albert Lamb's edited publication of A.S. Neill's writings.)

A day later we deplaned into the Moscow Airport, and for two hours we waited in line at customs as tall men lit up cigarettes under no smoking signs. Then, after our paperwork was deemed in order, we were quickly whisked off by four patient souls who had been

waiting for us those same long two hours. Two personalities among these four became important to us on our trip: Artiom, publisher of the Russian educational biweekly First of September (www.1september.ru) and Olga Leontieva, a leading-edge Russian teacher and writer. Artiom explained that we would all be staying at his apartment for the night, then waking up at 5am to drive 300km to catch up to the cruise boat housing our conference, which had already left Moscow without us.

Artiom gave us a tour of an amazingly well-lit Moscow that night. Apparently in the past few years, a huge amount of capital has been invested in Moscow. You can tell - fancy restaurants and shops; hotels; modern apartment buildings; church restorations; new cars flying by on wide streets. Jerry and Artiom talked about the vast differences between the facade of Moscow of five years ago versus today. The lights and glimmer weren't what I had been expecting after the Russian currency and bond crisis several years ago when hundreds of millions of dollars of foreign and Russian investments had been reduced to pennies. Then I remembered a fact I had recently heard about ski resorts in New England: they generally have to go bankrupt two or three times before enough capital has finally been invested for the business to cover its debt load and break even. The same thing could have happened in Russia. As I learned more about the cash economy, which exists in Russia to avoid the corporate income tax (on gross income), I realized how everything fit together.

Those millions of dollars of invested capital five years ago had been quickly transferred to the bank accounts of wheeler-dealing Russian businessmen. Then, following the bankruptcies, the cash still exists - much of it still in Russia - and has been invested in more private businesses. Russia, I believe, may be a great place for Russian businessmen to get very rich; but it offers very dubious prospects for foreign passive stock-holding and bond-touting investors! Will Russia have to go through another round of bankruptcies? Maybe or maybe not; I suspect it's mostly a question of opportunity - if dumb money is offered, someone will certainly capitalize on it.

The next morning, as promised, we drove to the ship, and joined the 10-day conference. Officially, it was the 10th anniversary conference of the Festival of New Schools of the Soviet Union. That original conference, with 400 participants, took place in Crimea in the fading days of the USSR. It resulted in many new connections among an emerging group of alternative schools throughout the republics and western alternatives; and, I was told, it facilitated the formation of hundreds of Montessori schools throughout the former Soviet republics. Somehow,

the conference was here reincarnated on a riverboat (far from the standards of what would pass as an American cruise ship), 10 days traveling on the Oka and Volga rivers.

From Summerhill's ambiguous party, the world was turned on its head. The schedule was printed daily; the activities were intense and numerous. We visited cities every day, and did the normal activities organized by the cruise company: touring fortresses, monasteries, museums, more monasteries. But we also added in visits to schools in many cities, where some of the conference participants gave presentations to local teachers. And finally, we had daily workshops on the boat. All told, there were about 75 Russians, 15 Dutch, and a small handful of others, including our American contingent. Among the group were teachers, researchers, reporters, students, alumni - all with some interest in personalized education.

Incidentally, one of my favorite books is Margaret Meade's 'Culture and Commitment' - one of her last books and also her shortest. Aside from the person who introduced the book to me (Yash Owada of the Johnston Center), I've never met anyone in the U.S. who has mentioned it. But on this Russian ship, there were two presenters who explicitly mentioned it in their presentations. Buy it now used from Amazon.com for less than five bucks.

One of the difficulties experienced on the ship was the language barrier. Three translators did amazingly well in this job, which really called for twenty. And yet there were not twenty. As a result of the lack of translators, it was difficult for the Russian-speakers and English-speakers (Americans and Dutch) to interact informally and come to a common set of goals for the conference.

Oddly, an additional related issue is that many of the participants did not share my interest in developing common, cross-cultural goals for the conference. The Russian contingent devoted substantial energy to developing a model for future educational environments in a project called 'The Virtual School.'

At one point, I suggested to the Russian organizing committee and to the Russian virtual schools group that instead of developing specific models, I felt it would be more powerful worldwide to try to incorporate the views of all the participants of the international conference and come up with more general, but commonly-held educational values. I explained that a document expressing these values could prove useful in the efforts of reformers worldwide to articulate the value of non-industrial, humanistic education.

However, the Russians knew what they wanted to get out of the conference, and what I was suggesting was not it. (For whatever reason, they seemed perhaps

a bit suspicious of working together with the international community. Go figure!) Interestingly, since the conference has ended, work on this 'virtual school' project has been continuing in Russia.

Another communication obstacle was the rules in the dining room. Due to the regulations on the ship, it turned out that whoever we sat down with for our first meal would be our dining companions throughout the 10-day cruise. While this may be appropriate for most family cruise trips, I felt it was a further obstacle to the informal intercultural mixing which might have nourished intercultural trust and understanding - perhaps the missing pieces to recognizing common purposes.

All in all, the conference was an impressive success considering the limited budget, small organizing staff and complications of international participation. I do believe that the international educational community, which is developing through the work of AERO and at conferences like this, has the potential to elevate the humanity of education worldwide.

Back in Moscow, Jerry and I had dinner with Alexander Tubelsky and Olga Leontieva, two of the people behind the 1000-student School of Self-Determination in Moscow, where students have the constitutional right to leave any class at any time without explanation. Olga explained that she had completed a book (in Russian) about her educational model, 'Park Schooling,' written as a dialogue with A.S. Neill.

In describing Park Schooling, she emphasizes the importance of a feedback model like Summerhill where students need not attend classes. She also explains that within the context of classes, she encourages different approaches to the conservatively-structured lessons A.S. Neill advocated. For instance, in her own field, biology, she noted the importance of week-long trips from the urban school to the countryside.

With my new friend Nina from the conference, I took the overnight train from Moscow to St. Petersburg for a two-day visit. It was a continuation of my crash course in Russian language, Russian economics, and chess. As promised, St. Petersburg was a blatantly European city. I felt like I was walking near a dreamy Louvre, slightly misshapen and painted an unfamiliar green.

Peter Christopher is AERO's webmaster. He invites you to contact him at peterchristopher@yahoo.com

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Steve Rosenthal

Natural Learning

By Roland Meighan

Review by Steve Rosenthal

This book is a collection of 25 articles that previously appeared in the British periodical, "Natural Parent." The articles are grouped under five headings: Parents, Learners and Learning systems, Teachers, Superstitions and Myths, and Visions of the next learning system.

The book discusses what is wrong with the current system, what role parents, learners and teachers can play in fixing it, and what education of the future could look like.

Meighan's liberal use of quotes from other authors makes Natural Learning an excellent jumping off point into the world of alternative education.

Educational Heretics Press, 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ, Great Britain
ISBN 1-900219-19-0

Inspecting the Island

by Hylde Sims

This novel, which almost predicted what became reality, tells of Jasper Bignold, Ofsted Inspector, who pays an informal visit to Coralford, a school the pupils run themselves by means of a weekly meeting and where classes are optional. Ofsted would like to close it down. He finds that Charlotte, a former pupil of Coralford and his first love, is also there. As a series of crises occur at the school and his relationship with Charlotte develops, where do his loyalties lie? The book is a narrative of self-discovery and an exploration of the lives of free children based on the author's experience as a pupil of AS Neill's Summerhill School. It is available from Seven-Ply Yarns, PO Box 217, Ipswich, England IP4 2NZ.

GUERRILLA LEARNING:

How to Give Your Kids a Real Education with or without School

by Grace Llewellyn and Amy Silver

We set out to present natural learning concepts to mainstream parents in a "how to" format. We had help from AERolist members who referred us to what we call "Guerrilla Learning Families" to interview; the book features comments from six or seven of these intriguing families whom we present as models of personal, idiosyncratic approaches to education. Thank you all for what you do.—Amy

Here is what some readers have said about the book:

"One of the most important books yet written on education and our current school-child crisis."
—Joseph Chilton Pearce

"A big-hearted book of important ideas. Be prepared to have your eyes opened to secrets the classroom hasn't learned!" — John Taylor Gatto

"Guerrilla Learning takes embattled parents out of the trenches where they've been all too often waging a frustrating war against antiquated school methods, and empowers them with skillful tools to help their kids develop their natural genius and engage in learning at its best: through inquiry, enthusiasm, and passionate engagement with self, others, and the world!" — Thomas Armstrong

A review from the September issue of Library Journal:

Llewellyn, a lecturer on the subject of home schooling and author of the classic *Teenage Liberation Handbook*, and Silver, who teaches parenting workshops, have come together to write this how-to book for parents who want to become more involved in their children's education, whether through home schooling or by supplementing traditional instruction. The authors offer five fundamental principles (opportunity, timing, freedom, interest, and support) that, they claim, will transform the way we relate to our children and greatly assist them in growing up to be joyful, passionate creators. Useful for parents and teachers alike, this valuable book closely examines how young people learn and illuminates its practical advice with many stories that make for both insightful and enjoyable learning. Whatever schooling venue parents choose, this book will help them instill a lifelong love of learning in their children. For large public and school libraries—Samuel T. Huang, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson ISBN 0-471-34960-7

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*BACK ISSUES of The Education Revolution 1 through 32 \$5 each.

New! 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

Ouida, long-time AERO volunteer, tells the story of growing up with Leonard Bernstein, Mike Wallace, singing duets on her pop demos with Paul Simon, piano-teaching secrets, triumphs and tragedies in her life, etc. www.myfriendlenny.com Special to AERO subscribers: \$15 including postage!

NEW! A Free Range Childhood: Self-regulation at Summerhill School

By Matthew Appleton

An updated, insightful account of everyday life at Summerhill. This is the first major book to appear on the school since A.S. Neill's 1960 bestseller inspired an international movement for alternative education. Through graceful and reflective writing, Appleton expands on Neill's stirring call for educational freedom, and explains how the world's most famous alternative school continues to demonstrate that children thrive in an atmosphere of freedom, trust and self-government. \$19.95

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.

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 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 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 several years, 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 phenomenon is explored in this new book. \$19.95, 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

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 \$7.50 for Education Revolution 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)

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! The Beginner's Guide to Homeschooling, Patrick Farenga, President of Holt Associates. 1998 version, great practical overview of how to start homeschooling. \$10.95 plus \$2 postage

Making It Up as We Go Along, Chris Mercogliano's book about the history of Albany's Free School . \$15 plus \$3 postage.

AUDIOCASSETTES:

AERO has an expanded list of over 100 tapes from our show , The Education Revolution on the TalkAmerica Network and Cable Radio Network . Tapes may be purchased for \$10, including postage. Contact AERO for a list of programs, featuring interviews with people such as Mary Leue, Joe Nathan, John Gatto, David Colfax, Andy Smallman, Pat Montgomery, Chris Mercogliano, Bob Barr, Arnie Langberg, Zoe Readhead, and many others

VIDEOS

*New! Video of demonstration of democratic decision-making process at Home Education Seaside Festival (HES FES) , Charmouth, England, May 2000. 900 home educators with 500 children attended the Festival. 18 minutes, \$15.

New! Two hour video of the 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Stork Family School, Vinnitsa, Ukraine. Said one person who received it: "I loved your Stork video. What an amazing school! You have some of the best footage of happy young faces I've ever seen." Call AERO to order. Each sale will support Stork. \$25 including postage

*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

*HOMESCHOOL RESOURCE CENTERS. A video of three homeschool resource center featuring the Snakefoot Education Center, at Common Ground Community, Puget Sound Community School and Clearwater School, both in Seattle. Snakefoot is a group of families that created a center in which 15 homeschooled children met three times a week. They also hired resource people. He video also includes an Interview with Any Smallman, Founder of PSCS, and a vidio of radio interviews with Clearwater. \$25

*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

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* Two videos: *Beautiful International Democratic Education Conference* at Stork Family School, in Vinnitsa, Ukraine and the 10th Year Anniversary Celebration in 2001. \$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

*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

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.____

The Education Revolution

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AERO, the **Alternative Education Resource Organization**, was founded in 1989 as part of the not-for-profit School of Living. The mission of AERO is to build, "the critical mass for the education revolution by providing resources which support self-determination in learning and the natural genius in everyone." AERO provides information, resources and guidance to students, parents, schools and organizations regarding the broad spectrum of educational alternatives: public and independent alternatives, home education, international alternatives, higher education alternatives, and more. The common feature in all these educational options is that they are *learner-centered*, focused on the interest of the learner rather than on an arbitrary curriculum. AERO, which produces the *Education Revolution Magazine* quarterly and maintains the Education Revolution website, is the networking hub for education alternatives throughout the world (www.EducationRevolution.org).

The Education Revolution Magazine includes the latest news and communications from the alternative education world as well as conference updates, job listings, book reviews, travel reports, and much more. With our readers' support we are helping make learner-centered education available to all students throughout the world. We welcome your participation and involvement.

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