

AERO-GRAMME #4

The Alternative Education Resource Organization Newsletter
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REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL CONFERENCE AT SUMMERHILL

(Ed. note: In July I was asked to represent alternative education in the United States at a conference at Summerhill, in England, with transportation expenses paid. The following is from the press release which I wrote upon my return.)

To many people the name "Summerhill" evokes memories of the free school movement of the 60's. Summerhill School was founded in 1921 by celebrated educational pioneer A.S. Neill, who died in 1973. Some people in the United States may have assumed that the school died with him (as he sometimes predicted would happen). It may come as a shock, but Summerhill School is still alive and well (as is the alternative school movement that it spawned), directed by Neill's daughter, Zoe Redhead. Redhead now has three of her own children attending Summerhill.

This summer, the Friends of Summerhill Trust sponsored an international alternative school conference at its campus in Leiston, Suffolk, England (about 2 hours northeast of London by train). The conference was entitled, "Self-Government at School and Home." Summerhill has long advocated self government and non-coercive education "where children could develop freely without fear." Decisions at the school are made by a democratic meeting in which the youngest student has an equal vote with the staff members. Students are not required to go to classes, and can spend their time doing such things as skateboarding, swimming, or playing Dungeons and Dragons if they wish. The theory is that when the students are interested in academic

learning, they will learn much better than if they are forced to learn when they are not ready. Neill once said that "Summerhill is possibly the happiest school in the world."

The conference was held from August 3-6. In attendance were representatives from France, West Germany, East Germany, Denmark, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Japan, Austria, Australia, and Malaysia. Next year they plan to sponsor a larger conference, in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of Summerhill.

Although operating with much the same philosophy as when it was founded, the composition of its student body has changed drastically since its high profile days, when nearly half of its student body was American. Now there are only two Americans, children of Albert Lamb, a current staff member and former Summerhill student himself. But Summerhill continues its pattern of being an international school. More than a third of the 70 Summerhill students are now Japanese. All but nine are boarding students. Tuition only amounts to about \$5000 American dollars.

It may be that people in the United States don't know that Summerhill is still open. Lamb hopes to change that, as he and Freer Spreckley, Secretary of the Friends of Summerhill Trust, will travel to the United States in early September, looking for funds and American students for Summerhill. Lamb is now completing a new compilation of Neill's writings that he feels better reflect Neill's ideas as they evolved from his earlier work. We are also told that a film about Neill's life is in the works, with George C. Scott rumored to be a possible lead.

At the conference, Ilka Lange, from Leipzig, in East Germany, reported that she is in the process of starting the first alternative school in East Germany. Martin Naf, of Switzerland, sent a communication to the conference noting that there had recently been a meeting in Budapest of Eastern Europeans who are determined to create new and effective school systems without "importing the kind of school ... in western Europe." In their literature they said, "Freedom is the first principal of all schooling...As free citizens we feel obliged to take the educational fate of our children into our own hands. To this end, we need new pedagogical ideas, discussions and an increased exchange of information across national boundaries" They also demanded, "...the right of all children to freedom-based education...the right to set up and run schools in independent hands, and the right of parents to free choice of school..."

In an ironic contrast to this Eastern European movement, a woman who has been teaching at a West German alternative school for the past three years told the conference that she is afraid to return to the school because she has been told that she will go to prison if she returns. The school has

been called illegal by the government authorities, as have the majority of West German alternative schools. She has already had to pay a fine. Her school, Freie Schule Kassel, was organized by parents and has about a dozen students.

The participants of the conference endorsed a statement condemning the government's "restrictive educational politics", demanding that the German authorities "stop discriminating against free childhood and education."

In light of the above, some French participants expressed concern about the impending European Common Market, fearing that restrictive laws in Germany could replace current constitutional rights given to parents to homeschool and start educational alternatives. Homeschooling is also illegal in West Germany. Austria had several alternative schools represented at the conference, but they told us that the schools come under the category of home schools, since homeschooling is legal in Austria, while alternative schools are not.

It was announced that two former Summerhill students, now married and living in France, plan to open a school using Summerhillian principals on land and buildings recently acquired near Lyons. Also, a video was shown of a Summerhill-based school in Thailand called Moo Ban Dek, or, The Children's Village School. Kilquarity School, a Summerhill-based school founded by John Aitkenhead in Scotland, will celebrate its 50th anniversary this Summer. Aitkenhead is still the headmaster.

Just before the conference, Summerhill completed its spring term, finishing up on July 28th with an all night end of term party. There was an hilarious play entitled "The Inspector is Coming", amazing musical talent, featuring a Summerhill rock and roll band, and children from several different cultures and nationalities living and playing together in an openness and joy that the Friends of Summerhill now want people everywhere to know and experience.

One former Summerhill student who came to the conference was 75 year old Brian Anscome. He has known the school for sixty five years, since he became a student in 1925. He described himself then as "an extremely nervous little boy, no self-confidence at all. I should imagine, just about the shyest boy of ten you could possibly imagine. Summerhill didn't change that overnight, but over the years, the influence of Summerhill changed all that, and I had confidence in the end." He said he had been in radio and communications all his life, and had also worked for the Reuters' News Agency. "I don't know what I would have done without Summerhill. You could almost say it was a life-saver, certainly in the emotional and intellectual sense. It changed my life."

HOLISTIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

(The Holistic Education Conference in early June created a potentially important networking group. We have already connected others with it. Let me know if you want more information, or would like a copy of the Chicago Statement on Education. The following was my preliminary press release. Other versions are available.)

On June 1 to 3, 1990, educators from a wide spectrum of alternative and holistic fields got together for the first time, in an historic meeting. Limited to 82 participants, those attending included representatives from the fields of public and independent alternative schools, community schools, Montessori and Waldorf Schools, experiential and "at risk" educational programs, cooperative education, college and university level alternatives, "global education" and world core curriculum, superlearning, European educational alternatives, and "Green" education, just to name a few.

The get-together was designed to explore the commonalities and differences among the groups represented, potentially leading to greater networking among educational alternatives, and a more united and coordinated approach to educational change world-wide.

Topics discussed were wide-ranging, including technological innovations in computer networking, how to communicate and implement these ideas into main-stream education, and whether or not to form a new organization or create a "network of networks." Several sub-groups were formed to continue communicating and developing these ideas, and some have subsequently met through telephone conferencing.

Although a name for the group has not been selected as of this writing, several have been proposed.

What was agreed to was a document that has been named the "Chicago Statement on Education."

It was also agreed that it would be beneficial for the group to meet again next year, and individuals were encouraged to continue networking with the others, and to organize regional conferences of a similar nature. At least one in the Eastern United States, and one in Europe are presently being explored. The Chicago meeting, which was actually held in a Catholic seminary north of Chicago, ended dramatically, as a torch was passed around the room from participant to participant. It was a torch that had traveled around the world, through over 60 countries, and had been passed from hand to hand by presidents, the Pope, and thousands of others of equal stature.

NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE AT STANFORD

The 20th National Alternative Education Conference was held from June 28-July 1 at Stanford University. There were several hundred participants, mostly from public alternative schools all around the country.

We brought a group there by train, and did a presentation entitled "Democracy and Learner Based Curriculum." Angela Cross, a former student at Shaker Mountain School and current staff member at the Free School in Albany, was co-leader of the group. With our group, we demonstrated democratic decision making, and how to build a curriculum based on the interest of the students, rather than an arbitrary outside standard.

William Glasser was a keynote speaker. He has been known for his books "Reality Therapy" and "Schools Without Failure". His newest book is called, "The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion."

There were many other significant speakers and workshop leaders, including Dr. Mary Ann Raywid (who told me recently that she will go to the USSR shortly to participate in a closed seminar on educational philosophy), Joe Nathan, John Anderson (who said he has just stated a new job, directing Alternative Education for the State of Washington), Herb Kohl (who was interested in networking with the Holistic Education group), Mary Ellen Sweeney (who will now edit Changing Schools, see "Letters"), Dave Lehman (Principal of Alternative Community School, in Ithaca), Emanuel Pariser (of the Community School, in Maine), Arnie Langberg (who administrates alternative education in the Denver Schools and has started several public alternatives), and Robert Fizzell, just to name a few.

Fizzell, in an article in Changing Schools, pointed out that, "We seem to forget that our current concept of family is quite unique in human history. A product of the immigration experience and the westward expansion, Americans developed a model of the independent, nuclear family as the basic unit of society. The rest of mankind has always seen the basic unit of society as the extended family in interaction with other extended families in a community, band, or other such system. Approximately 5 to 15 interacting adults with their children has been the typical unit, not one or two isolated adults." Sounds like some community schools that I know! Fizzell maintains that because of the lack of such community support, the small family units simply aren't making it, and this spills over into the schools.

The 2nd Annual Meeting of the International Affiliation of Alternative School Associations and Personnel had the usual fireworks, which have been going on since before this "organization" was created at the Orlando conference last year. The basic conflict is between the "Choice" and the

"at risk" advocates. Things bogged down over whether to support the effort to obtain a Presidential Proclamation for a National Alternative Schools Day. The fear, mostly among the "choice" people, was that alternative schools would become labeled as just being for problem kids.

The group did empower me to acknowledge Dorothy Fadiman's contribution to alternative education with her video, "Who do These Kids Love School", which has just aired on PBS nationally (if haven't seen it, it is terrific, and we can still get a copy for you through AERO). Our group was graciously hosted by Dorothy and her husband, Jim, while we were at the conference.

We also stayed with Ken Lebensold and his wife, Etta. We had just seen Ken at the Holistic Education Conference, in Chicago. Etta arranged for our group to go on a cruise of San Francisco Bay. When we were in Santa Cruz, we stayed with John and Jeane Williams at the Bosch Ba'hai' Center. They plan to return to the Yucatan with their new son, Troy, where they home to eventually start a school. John Directed a school in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. While we were in California, our group also went on the Cable Cars, to Golden Gate Park, a Giants game, a steam train to the Redwoods, Disneyland and Universal Studios.

In the LA area, we stayed at Play Mountain Place, and met with Director, Pat Poole (see story about teacher training). In Texas on the way back, we had a great time staying at Greenbriar School. Greenbriar is a school that has evolved into a community. For those who may know Anibal Gonzales, of Greenbriar, he has been in Hollywood writing a screenplay with the man who directed "Stand and Deliver".

Many thanks to all the people who helped and hosted our group.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING

We are still pursuing this concept, as are other people on several fronts. With thousands of alternative schools and perhaps millions of homeschoolers, it is amazing that there is still no complete program that we know of that addresses this need.

I regret to inform you that Chancellor Joe Fernandez dropped the ball when the dean of a local university proposed that such a program could be set up for New York City. But considerable interest in the idea has been expressed by Goddard College, Friends World College, Antioch University, and Adelphi University.

Jim Murphy, who teaches at the public alternative, West Side High School, in New York City, is actively looking for a graduate program in alternative

education. He writes, " Why don't you write a \$500,000 grant that includes 3 or 4 appropriate schools..?" and gives several suggestions.

Jackson Kytle was directing an external masters at Antioch University, which seemed to have some potential, when he was named the new President of Goddard College. We have been in communication with him about this. Presently he is participating in the School Year 2000 Conference, in Switzerland.

At the NCACS conference, we talked to Dave Balough, of Greenbriar School, who is on a committee to explore the creation of a teacher training program.

One woman who came to one of my workshops at the conference was Diane Clark (Box 206, Chautauqua, NY 14722). She is a teacher in an alternative classroom in a public school who would be open to an internship program, and could offer room and board.

When we were in California, we saw a remarkable training program at Play Mountain Place. PMP is a forty year old alternative school in West Los Angeles, with students aged 2-13. They have several programs, including HEP--Humanistic Education Program -teacher training and support, PPP--Peaceful Parenting Program, ABLE-Anti-bias Leadership in Education, and CAE--Continuing Alternative Education for Teachers.

We saw several interns at PMP, from places such as Japan and Maylasia as well as the United States. They have a residential facility, and pay about \$3500 a year. Some plan to go back to their countries to start alternative schools. PMP, 6063 Hargis St, LA, CA 90034.

\$20,000 MATCHING GRANT

(The following is taken from an application to the Bay Foundation for funds toward a matching grant provided by Josh Mailman.)

I'm pleased to inform you that our work in promoting the growth and awareness of educational alternatives is proceeding apace. Of particular note is a matching grant of \$20,000 from Josh Mailman of the Threshold Foundation, toward which we have raised \$7000. Also, the School of Living is now sponsoring the work of the Alternative Education Resource Organization. It is one of the oldest and most respected organizations in this country working for educational change and ecological responsibility (see AERO-GRAMME #1 article).

Before continuing, I would like to again thank the Bay Foundation for providing the matching fund for the Kee Way Win Project. With those funds,

we were able to help the Kee Way Win Tribe, in Northern Ontario, organize an educational program and give them some educational supplies. As you may remember, at that time the tribe had been essentially abandoned by government officials; they had no school and their children were illiterate. I'm pleased to tell you that we were able to help them organize a small school and inspire the parents to start teaching their children. We also made several contacts with Canadian officials and media. Chief Geordi Kakepentum, in a recent phone call, informed me that the government has now been convinced to provide three teachers for this year, and funds to renovate a log building into a school. He also hopes that the government will recognize their land base in the near future.

Along similar lines, we also helped a group in Missoula, Montana organize a new independent alternative school (see articles). In less than a week, we helped them organize Shining Mountain School, which opened this fall. In addition, the public school Superintendent and board members who attended my presentations have moved rapidly toward establishing public alternatives. Thus, we helped establish a multi-pronged approach to educational change in Missoula. Hopefully, this is a model that can be used in other places.

In the last several months, we have become a hub of communication about educational alternatives and restructuring. In April, I attended and ran workshops in Virginia at the national conference of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools (of which I am former Executive Director). Then, in late May, I was invited to attend an unusual "Conference on Holistic/Global Education" in Chicago, which was the first attempt to unite all forms of educational alternatives and "discuss the dramatic changes currently sweeping the world and its educational institutions."

In late June, I brought a group of students to the primarily public "Alternative Education Conference," at Stanford University in California, where we demonstrated democratic decision making at our workshop. I networked with many people there, including Herb Kohl, author of the book "36 Children" and the one who coined the words "Open Classroom".

While I was in California, my New York office was contacted by the Friends of Summerhill, in England. They said they would pay my way to an international alternative school conference at Summerhill if I could represent and report on alternative education in the United States. With only a week between in New York, I participated in this important meeting, and gained yet another perspective on the educational changes now taking place on many fronts. I also took eight hours of videos of Summerhill and the conference, which I hope to be able to edit into a meaningful documentary.

There is much more to report on, including other video projects, television appearances, such as a recent one on WPIX, channel 11 in New York, the growth of AERO-GRAMME, and other writing projects. These come under the general heading of media approaches, and I believe that we must press strongly to find means of effectively communicating to the public about educational alternatives and ways to restructure education. One important step in that direction is the national broadcast of the documentary, "Why do These Kids Love School", for which I was a consultant. It features an independent alternative school and eight public alternatives around the country.

So far we have done the above with a very minimal amount of funding. But time is awasting. For it must be understood clearly that education in this country and around the world is going to drastically change before the end of this decade. However, that does not necessarily mean that the change will be good or effective. It is imperative that we be in a position to shape that change....

(Ed. note: Even if the Bay Foundation grant comes through, we will still need several thousand dollars more to meet the matching fund. We now have a chance to have a more significant impact on the direction that education will take in the future. Any donations to AERO will be matched by this grant. Make contributions payable to AERO or the School of Living, and send to 417 Roslyn Rd., Roslyn Hts., NY 11577. All contributions are tax deductible.)

NELLIE DICK AND THE MODERN SCHOOL MOVEMENT

For more than a year I have been putting together a video featuring Nellie Dick, a 97 year old pioneer in alternative education. At last, it is finished and available for purchase and distribution. The following is a review of the video by Dr. Ron Miller, Editor of the Holistic Education Review:

"Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement" offers a rare and intimate glimpse into an important educational movement of the past. As we listen to this remarkable 96-year-old woman describe her experiences in anarchist schools of the 1910's and 1920's, we realize that many of the issues we struggle with today are perennial educational questions. Alternative and humanistic educators today, who advocate both greater freedom and responsibility for young people, will learn how Nellie Dick and her colleagues worked out this delicate balance. Those who resist the conservative tide of "cultural literacy" and obsessive standardized testing will be inspired by the passionate idealism of the Modern School people; they believed that people learn from the time of birth, irrespective of our efforts to teach them what we think they should know--and their faith in

the learning process was borne out by the creativity and joyful learning of their students.

Dr. James Dick, Nellie's son, also appears in the video. He describes the Modern Schools from a student's perspective, since he was literally born into the movement. Now 70, and a well known pediatrician in Oyster Bay, he was one of the founders of the Summerhill Society. Summerhill, the Dick's note, came after the Modern School Movement was started.

The video also shows excerpts from last year's Modern School reunion, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. That reunion featured presentations by former students of the Modern Schools in Spain, where the movement began, with the work of Francisco Ferrer. Ferrer founded literally hundreds of schools, until he was shot by the government in 1909. Yet the movement continued in Spain until the 1930's.

I just returned from the 1990 Modern School reunion. Paul Averich was a featured speaker. He wrote the book, "The Modern School Movement", which is strongly recommended reading. Nellie Dick was also scheduled to speak. She just returned home a week ago from the hospital, after suffering from a slight stroke. People didn't know if she'd make it, but she did, and spoke for 45 minutes. We were thrilled! The dozen "Nellie Dick" tapes that I'd brought with me were sold out. But, like Jay Leno says, we'll make more. I'll give a complete report on the reunion in the next AERO-GRAMME.

We will sell the Nellie Dick and the Modern School Movement tape for half price, \$25, to AERO subscribers, until October 15th. We can also make a copy tape of this year's reunion, with Nellie and Paul Averich's talks, for the same price. In Europe, the Nellie Dick tape can be ordered in the PAL system from Clive Baldwin, 357 Oldham Rd, Rochdale Lancashire OL16 5LN. The price is L15. Clive Baldwin is a member of Lib Ed Magazine.

REPORT FROM THE KAHNAWAKE MOHAWKS

We received distressing news when we first talked by phone to Dianne Delaronde of the Indian Way School, at the Mohawk Reserve at Kahnawake. They are located across from Montreal, and the Mohawks blockaded the Mercier Bridge in sympathy with another Mohawk Band from Oka, about 25 miles away. There are about 4,000 Mohawks at Kahnawake, and 1800 at Oka.

At that time, according to Delaronde, the owners of a golf course were trying to expand it onto Mohawk land, which included an old Indian cemetery. To stop this, the Mohawks at Oka established a small settlement on the nearby land, and build a barrier. On July 11th they were raided, and a policeman was killed. Delaronde believes that the policeman was killed by his own men, because there has been no ballistics report or result from the

inquiry. "If they thought we had done it, it would be in all the papers. That's one of the problems we face. We can't get information out from our side. As far as the other side is concerned, we're all criminals."

She said that her reserve was surrounded and cut off from food for fifty days, and supplies were running short. Some people were able to sneak in some food by boat, because Kanawake is located on the St. Lawrence River, but that was mostly blockaded by the police. She feels that the government was trying to starve them and take away their sovereignty over their land.

In a more recent conversation (September 12), Dianne said that the Mercier Bridge was now open, but that soldiers and even tanks roam the reserve. She said that a group of men, women and children are still in Oka, surrounded by troops from the province. The group wants to negotiate, but the province is demanding unconditional surrender. She feels that the overall issue is still native sovereignty, which was never addressed in the proposed Canadian constitution. She said that there is now a "peace camp" of thousands of native and non-natives gathering at Oka, demanding discussion of that issue.

Meanwhile, she said that the Indian Way School still plans to open next week, as will the Survival School. We helped the Mohawks at Akwesasne start the first Indian Way School in 1971, and had regular exchanges with them and the Indian Way School at Kahnawake. Last year, I brought the Autre Chose group, from France, to stay at the Long House at Kahnawake. Dianne Delaronde hosted me at her house when I was on my way to Kee Way Win.

HOMESCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS AND NEWS

The biggest homeschool news around here since the last AERO-GRAMME is that I started homeschooling my ten year old niece, Jenifer Goldman, in April. The first thing we did was travel to the NCACS conference in Virginia. From then on, Jen documented her experiences as a new homeschooler, with emphasis on some of our travels. These include a train trip to Montana to help a group in Missoula start a school, a "Teen Tour" train trip to California, where we went to the Alternative School Conference at Stanford, and a variety of activities with the Long Island Home School Association. Growing Without Schooling published excerpts of her story, about the NCACS conference in issue #75. Here is a sample:

I really enjoyed this trip. It gave me a chance to feel what it was like to have freedom. To me, freedom means a chance to make your own decisions. It's not just that you have to respect other people's rights. Even without freedom you have to respect other people's rights. But I felt that my right

to make decisions was being respected also.

The kids there seemed to be more like me, and I was able to get along with them. Whenever I go to other places, kids are always so concerned about fashion, and I have to look exactly right, or I don't fit in. Here, I still wanted to look good, but I felt that I didn't have to be so worried whether I looked perfect or not. I feel that we were treated more fairly, and kids were treating each other more fairly. Their whole attitude toward life and what it means was different. They didn't believe in violence. They didn't exclude other kids because of their race or color. Their overall view seemed a lot more kind and better.

Jen and I are finishing a booklet of her experiences, along with photographs. Let us know if you'd like a copy. For more information about the NCACS conference: 58 Schoolhouse Rd., Summertown, TN 38483.

Mark and Helen Hegener of Home Education Magazine wrote, "Of course we'll exchange subscriptions with your AERO-GRAMME. It's becoming one of the more interesting and informative of the many publications we receive on alternative education! The Hegeners now have over 60 titles on their Homeschool Bookshelf. They mentioned that in their magazine they outline "the current battle for power within the homeschooling movement. For so many years homeschoolers fought their biggest battles with the educational establishment, but now we're besieged from within our own ranks by leaders who would represent all homeschoolers on a national level, but who limit participation with their organizations to those who can sign a very narrowly focused statement of religious faith..." Their Address: PO Box 1083, 1814 HWY 20East, Tonasket, WA 98855.

Along those same lines, I have had a very interesting dialogue on the Prodigy Computer Network with Stephanie Martindale, a Christian homeschooler from the state of Washington. She feels that most Christian homeschoolers do not want to be exclusive. On the other hand, she felt that the Chicago Statement, issued by the Holistic Education group, was exclusive of HER point of view.

Cathy Tomlan, of the National Homeschool Association writes, "We would be delighted to exchange newsletters with you...Following mention of the NHA in Good Housekeeping magazine, we received over two thousand letters of inquiry within just a few weeks' time." The NHA offers a newsletter, Homeschool Travel Directory, Mentor Program, Legislative Watch, and New Homeschooler Information Packet. Their National Conference will be September 21-3 at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, MD. We Plan to attend. NHA, PO Box 58746, Seattle, WA 98138.

In a related event, Katherine Hauk of the Alliance for Parental

Involvement in Education tells us that a group from WA that is going to the NHA conference will tour New York state for the preceding week. The Hegeners will be part of that group. ALLPIE, PO Box 59, East Chatham, NY 12060.

Faye Jenkins, a homeschooler from Indianapolis, Indiana, has sent a contribution and subscribed to AERO-GRAMME. . We have met her and her children at several conferences, most recently at the NCACS, of which she has now become a board member. She and Jenifer and her son, Stuart, worked together on the conference store. "Jenifer was incredible." she wrote. The Jenkins' are now on the Prodigy Network, and are also interested in getting into amateur radio.

Maria Sperduti tells us of the Education Resource Center of Rhode Island (50 Rounds Avenue, Providence, RI 02907), which she helped to create. It serves homeschool families and others who want to "encourage progressive and alternative methods of education." They will have a dozen teachers as resources this year, teaching such things as crafts, drama, music, creative writing, carpentry, and organizing field trips.

Nancy Plent of the Unschoolers Network (2 Smith St, Farmingdale, NJ 07727), tells us that their conference of New Jersey homeschoolers "was a real success. " About 200 attended. "So many people DEMANDED that it become an annual event that we decided we'd do it....It's a real kick looking through your newsletter and seeing names of schools I remember from the old "free school" days....Maybe next conference you'd like to offer a workshop?"

The Snakefoot Educational Association is a homeschool group in Lexington, VA. They have about twenty homeschool children, aged 6-13, that meet three times a week at the Common Ground Community. They are looking for a teacher, experienced in alternative education methods, to work with their group for the 1990-91 school year. Send resume & references to SEA, PO Box 189, Lexington, VA 24450. Phone 703 463-2903 or 9451. (Incidentally, Snakefoot bought some of the temporary tattoo kits from AERO and used them as a fundraiser at a local fair, as did Grassroots School, of Tallahassee, FL. They both commented that it was a fun activity, with the students easily learning how to apply them. Contact AERO for more info.)

The WPIX (channel 11, NY) TV show that I did on educational alternatives in the tri-state area aired for the third time on September 4th. I've received over 100 phone calls and more letters from viewers looking for alternative schools or information about home schooling. One of the calls I received was from a woman whose son had cancer. The school system didn't want to bother with him while he had treatment "because they figured he was going to die anyway", so she taught him herself for three years. He recovered from the cancer, and when he went back to public school, they found out

that he had progressed far faster while he was being homeschooled than he had been doing when he was in school before. This woman is now convinced that homeschooling is the way to go, even though she came upon it by accident. She wanted information so that she could begin homeschooling her three younger children, rather than leave them in "the terrible school they've been going to" in Queens. (Videotape of the show, "Best Talk" can be ordered through AERO).

MAIL AND COMMUNICATIONS

John Potter of the New School of Northern Virginia informs us that they are about to begin their second year, with more than 30 students. They have also established an evening lecture series, and are looking into the establishment of a foundation to support the empowerment of children with children as direct participants. Potter and I have been communicating on the Prodigy Network. His ID# is WTJJ22A (mine is DPMX82A). We have been talking about getting special rates from Prodigy for schools. After conversing about the Summerhill trip, he said he will join the Friends of Summerhill, and would like to attend their conference next year.

Barbara Ann Rodgers-Hendricks (Route 1, Box 108-5, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459) has set up an interactive newsletter which hopes, among other things, to "form a nationwide network of communities representing all segments of our society" and will "encourage the development of community based political leadership, including a community presidency." She wrote that "I read your interview with Pat Seery and said, 'My philosophy exactly!'" She first read about AERO in TRANET (Box 567, Rangely, ME 04970) an international publication for "people who are changing the world by changing their own lives.."

After having helped Prescott College become quite successful, Derek Peterson writes that he has now taken on the new challenge of working with Sheldon Jackson College, in Sitka, Alaska. He still feels that Prescott, in AZ, is "truly the most open and innovative college in the country." He is Director of Admissions at Sheldon Jackson. "They have brought me here ...to try and move SJC toward a more open curriculum, encourage the students to become more self-directed...(It) is about 50% native Alaskan...My job allows me to travel to the Alaskan bush, as well as attend academic conferences around the country. I am trying to spread the word that academic process and content need not be mutually exclusive of one another. Hopefully, with your network's assistance and expertise, I can participate in the dialogue and refine my words..." In his fascinating letter, Peterson continues by describing several adventures in the Alaskan bush.

Fluffy Golod, of Southside Family School, in Minneapolis, sent us an important article about "having negotiated a landmark contract with the

local school district. We now receive state aid for students deemed eligible by Minneapolis Public Schools....So now we're an independent program with a public school contract. We still set our own curriculum, hire our own teachers and use our policy to determine enrollment....This year the district contribution covered almost 50% of our budget." Southside was founded in 1971. It is a "progressive alternative elementary program...For 18 of our 19 years, we operated as a private school for poor kids." Unfortunately, space doesn't allow us to reproduce the whole article about this significant arrangement, but we can send it to anyone interested. She adds this footnote: "Alternative schools should investigate the possibility of affiliating with local/regional alternative funds which are springing up all over the country...For a complete listing, contact the Alliance For Choice in Giving, c/o Bruce Miller, 4342 Blaisdell Av. S., Mpls, MN 55409." Fluffy noted, "I like AERO-GRAMME. It's so nice to get a quick overview of who's doing what."

SFS has developed an oral history curriculum called Gathering Stones. It is a step by step guide to teaching an oral history unit to young children. It includes a 35 minute VHS tape and a complete teacher curriculum resource guide. For more information, write Southside Family School, 2740 1st Ave S, Mpls, MN 55408

Bob Ferris, Principal of New Orleans Free School, a public magnet school, writes that he was embroiled in a public debate over a new testing program that was being imposed on the New Orleans school system. One of Ferris' letters that was published in the Times-Picayune, criticized the program, called Systematic Approach for Effectiveness (SAFE). He said in part, "...We are at present...making testing the actual education instead of testing genuine education. In the process, all too often we are deadening our students instead of actively engaging them in learning." Ferris periodically sends out reprints and letters on educational topics. His address is 3601 Camp St, New Orleans, LA 70115.

Roy Weaver sent us notice that after 12 years of editing Changing Schools, he is turning over the editorship to Mary Ellen Sweeney. Changing Schools is a key publication in alternative education, primarily but not exclusively featuring public alternatives. They have been the main mover in keeping the National Alternative Education Conference going. Their new address will be Changing Schools, c/o Colorado Options in Education, 98 N. Wadsworth Blvd, #127, Box 191, Lakewood, CO 80226.

Steve and Candy Landvoigt of the Highland School, in West Virginia, keep in regular touch with AERO. They recently informed us that they are still looking for another teacher for this school year. They said that "someone with strong interest/experience in science/math/computers is preferred. Highland is a small school (15 students) in a farm environment.

Democratically run and ungraded, highland has an interest based curriculum and students' class attendance is voluntary." Contact Candy Landvoigt at 304 869-3250 or 3252. Address: Rt 83 Box 56, Highland WV 26346.

Vikki Howard, Master Teacher of Heart of the Earth Survival School, subscribed to AERO-GRAMME. She said, "We are an American Indian education program, K-12, operating since 1972. I am interested in hearing more about other independent school programs." They are in Minneapolis.

At the Holistic Education Conference we met Barbara Taylor, who founded the school that is named after her. When we returned to New York, I visited the school in New York City, along with my niece, Jenifer, and Patrice Creve, who was visiting from France (He coordinates the French alternative school organization ANEN). The Barbara Taylor School is an "independent, community based day care and elementary school in New York's inner city...It provides a much-needed oasis of decency, respect and educational rigor in the wasteland that is inner city education, for it is committed as an institution to developing each and every child as a leader.."

The School of Living had its Annual Membership Meeting on April 28th at the Common Ground Community, in Lexington, Virginia. Common Ground is one of several communities for which the land is held in trust by the School of Living. The SOL publishes a newsletter, Green Revolution, and has several hundred subscribers. The School of living is 55 years old, and had much to do with initiating the ideas of organic farming, health food, consumer protection, land trust, and environmental protection. For more information, write AERO, or RD 1 Box 185A, Cochranville, PA 19330.

Chris Spicer, who coordinates a national organization promoting Folk Education, sent a contribution to AERO. We met him at the NCACS conference. He mentioned that he had tapes from the Miles Horton Memorial weekend at Highlander Folk School. His address is 4112 38th St NW, Washington, DC 20016.

Gail Simmons of Missoula, Montana wrote that "I attended your speech in Missoula. I have registered my daughter in Shining Mountain School and have great hopes of her getting an enjoyable, thought provoking education. The school has attracted some energetic, talented people..." Incidentally, Liz Rantz now informs us that Shining Mountain will open this fall in a rented church building, with more than 30 students and two full time teachers.

Kathy Gibbs writes that she is working on a paper for her Peace Studies Senior Thesis that is aimed at encouraging people to implement a Peace Education program in their communities. She would like help from AERO readers in two areas: "1) What to call the program. How to label it throughout the paper so that mainstream conservatives will not be turned

off. 2) How to deal with the subject of values. I would invite anyone to recommend literature on this subject or give suggestions to me." 127 Cardamon Dr, Edgewater, MD 21037.

The director of the Teen-Age Parent Program in Tucson AZ writes that because of the failure of tax votes, "local alternatives...are currently undergoing "reorganization" which is largely a euphemism for program reduction or elimination...I have no clear picture of what will be left after all the dust settles, except that we will have a Teen Parent Program. We will take teens who are pregnant (or their boyfriends) and girls who have delivered on a space available basis--we can take about 130 teens and babies..."

Professor William Parrett of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, set me the list of alternative schools in Alaska, adding the Fairbanks now has a new alternative junior-senior high school, the Howard Luke Alternative. He is also working with Oregon State University to develop a Center for At Risk Youth.

Dr. H. Earl Heusser, Executive Director of the National Association of Private, Nontraditional Schools and Colleges (NAPNSC), writes that "We received your AERO-GRAMME #3 which is an ambitious and needed endeavor. It is good to know of alternative education being implemented around the country." NAPNSC has an accrediting commission, and has accredited several schools and colleges. It is in the process of being formally recognized as an accrediting agency by the US. Department of Education. "As you have witnessed, there are those in the country who are asking that educators make positive changes to be more responsive to educational needs. We feel that the political climate in the country is also more favorable in realizing the usefulness of NAPNSC.." 182 Thompson Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81503.

FOREIGN COMMUNICATIONS

Our French connection continues to go strong. Patrice Creve, Secretary of ANEN made the trip from Toulouse, France to New York, and traveled with me to the Holistic/Global Education conference, in Chicago. After the conference, we visited the Barbara Taylor School in New York, after having met founder, Barbara Taylor, in Chicago. Patrice is also in communication with City As School in New York, with representatives having visited him in France. After the Summerhill conference, I went to see Patrice and Nadine for two days in Caen. Patrice is still able to arrange exchanges for any schools or homeschoolers interested. (7 Rue du Covent, 31500 Toulouse, France). Meanwhile, Roger Auffrand, director of the Agence Information Enfance and publisher of a French alternative school directory, came over to the Summerhill conference after he was informed of it.

Bernice Singer writes from Jerusalem, Israel, "You may still be spinning on your usual axis as I write this, but I wanted to thank you for the latest AERO-GRAMME before getting engulfed, as usual, in the next crisis. I admire the creative way you bounced back from the "brough" (Israeli word for "mess")....and it sounds as if you probably did yourself a favor. We all need to get shaken-up a bit when we get into our 40's..."

Ron Wetteroth of Arthur Morgan School, in NC writes, "Alex and I appreciated AERO #3 and are sending a small contribution. We are leaving AMS..to spend a year traveling. We will visit several school in the US, then go to Australia, where with Roger Holdsworth's help, we have corresponded with several schools there to visit, and finally, will spend several months an an international school in the mountains of southern India. We're looking forward to it all, and to traveling with our daughters, now 10 and 8." They also enclosed a short comic alternative school play, which we we send to anyone interested.

Speaking of Roger Holdsworth, we have received his latest issue of Connect, (the Newsletter of Youth Participation in Education), which is filled with stories relating to Eliot Wigginton's visit to Australia. Wigginton is famous for creating the Foxfire books, and the program which gave rise to it. He still teaches in Rabun County High School, in GA, and in 1989 was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. We met Roger Holdsworth when he came to a regional NCACS conference at the Meeting School, in NH. Connect always gives us a plug in their publication, so we'll return the favor, again: 12 Brooke St, Northcote 3070, Victoria, Australia.

When I was at Summerhill, I called Eberhard Mutscheller, in Berlin, West Germany. He helps coordinate German alternative schools, He could not come to the conference, because he was about to go to the USSR to meet with Greens there, and to look for educational alternatives. His report should be interesting.

Norbert Scholz was at the Summerhill conference. He teaches at a West German alternative school, and gave me the latest list of 20 alternative schools in West Germany, which I will copy for people interested.

While I was there I also phoned Martin Naf, who helps organize the alternative schools in Switzerland. He told me about the conference on educational alternative in eastern Europe, which had met in Budapest, Hungary (see Summerhill story). He sent me detailed information on the meeting. Meanwhile, the next meeting of alternative schools will be on November 10th and 11th in La-Chaux-De-Fonds, Switzerland. Contact person is Eric Jeanneret, Bois Gentil 7, CH-2300 La-Chaud-De-Fonds. Naf also puts out a newsletter in German "to help keep the flow of information going."

His address is Landskronstr. 36, CH-4056 Basel. He said that "there seems to be a general wish among alternative school people to get closer cooperation" and that "interest in international contacts and developments among alternative schools is strong."

We met Damian Randle at the Holistic/Global Education conference. Randle publishes Green Teacher, Machynlleth, Powys, Wales SY208DN. Green Teacher has many articles relating to environmental and alternative education issues. The latest issue contained everything from Green Adult Education to a fascinating article about coming of age rites by the Aboriginal people of Australia. We now have an exchange of publications.

We met several people at the Summerhill conference from alternative schools in Vienna, Austria. One, Lotie Kreissler, had recently been at an alternative school meeting in Spain, and gave me a list of participants. There are three alternative schools in the building where her school is.

At the conference, we received information on the Green College, in Oxford, England. Peter de La Cour is involved with the Green College. We first met him at the Assembly of the Fourth World meeting in NC. We also have an article by de la Cour about the Danish model of education, which we will send to anyone interested. Incidentally, we heard that they had a small but successful meeting of the Assembly of the Fourth World in Dallas, Texas in July. Helen Nearing was a speaker.

When we were in France, we talked to Benedict Russel. He and his wife, Marie Bernier, plan to start a Summerhill school in Lyon within the next three years. They already have land and some buildings. They are both former Summerhill students. Their address: 4 R de Treves, 69009 Lyon, France.

Several of the 9 students that just graduated from Summerhill might be interested in interning at an American alternative school. Contact AERO if you are interested.

The Friends of Summerhill Trust assists Summerhill School and promotes the ideas of A.S. Neill. They organized this year's conference and will organize next year's international conference, celebrating Summerhill's 70th anniversary. To join FOST, send \$25 c/o Summerhill School, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4HY, UK.

Of course, there is much more material, including a list of European schools given to me by Patrice Creve, information about the Findhorn Community, in Scotland, a Small School in Sudan, Moo Ban Dek, in Thailand, and two new schools in Japan. I just don't have space for any more.
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When I was on the plane, I met Martin von Hildebrand. He is the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of Colombia. As commissioner, he has been able to return land along the Amazon to the Indigenous people, so that they now control 20% of Colombian schools. He convinced the former president that it was the best way to protect the environment. He went to England to help plan a World Forest Conference. He is one of the highest ranking "Green" oriented people, in a position to promote real change. In a recent phone call, he said he is still working under the new President of Colombia, but is interested in concentrating on the Amazon. He said that there are 80 Indian languages in Colombia, and that the tribes now had considerable educational autonomy.