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The

Education

Revolution

With special **CHANGING SCHOOLS** section
The Magazine of the Alternative Education Resource Organization
(Formerly *AERO-gramme*)

COVER PHOTO

Cover story: Summerhill wins watershed court victory. Two happy students at Summerhill (this is already scanned in #28) #27TIF

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The Education Revolution

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

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SUMMERHILL WINS IN COURT!

PHOTO:

Use tif 19 from AERO 28, just the head section

Caption: Zoe Readhead at Summerhill

On March 20th, 2000, Summerhill School won an important court victory, giving them the right to continue operating the school with A.S. Neill's philosophy of freedom in Education. The following is excerpted from an interview with Zoe Readhead, Neill's daughter and current Summerhill Head, which was by Jerry Mintz on his Talk America Network radio show. The final scene with the school in a London courtroom seems worthy of a feature film, although it might seem somewhat unbelievable. It is nevertheless true.

JERRY: This week an event took place that sent shock waves around the world. All of you concerned at government interference with individuals should know that Summerhill has been under attack for a year because it would not conform to the rigid English national curriculum. They have a national curriculum that everyone in all the schools is supposed to follow there. Summerhill brought the government to court to assert their right to run the school according to the philosophy of their founder, AS Neill, a child-centered approach. In the final week there was a tribunal and they actually brought the whole school into court.

ZOE: For the last 9 years, the Inspectors from the government department have visited Summerhill every year. Ordinary schools get an inspection every four to five years. We felt we were under attack. In March 1999 we had 8 inspectors come and visit us for three days, bearing in mind there were only about 57 children at the time. When the report was finally written it was a sensational piece of writing, fit for the tabloid newspapers and not fit to be a serious government report. It even appeared to be *designed* for the tabloids. It was a very nasty piece of writing indeed. It used words like "foul mouth" and "the children were in pursuit of idleness." It accused the school of health and safety problems and that the children were not learning sufficiently. And then the Secretary of State for Education issued a notice of complaint to the school, which means that the school was required to follow the changes that were demanded.

JERRY: Why do you think that they would want to attack Summerhill in this way? The government has established a national curriculum in which every student in England is supposed to participate, is that right?

ZOE: The national curriculum is not compulsory for independent schools although they use the national curriculum as their benchmark; so in fact, we are obliged to follow the national curriculum though legally we don't have to.

JERRY: Summerhill took an approach that was entirely different from what the government does with the national curriculum. At Summerhill students are not required to go to classes, decisions are made democratically, and that's been going on ever since the school started. In a sense, if Summerhill was successful it would almost show the government that what they were doing was not necessary.

ZOE: One wonders about that. It's very difficult to know where all this came from. Whether it was just blundering bureaucracy or whether it was something more sinister, we'll never know. Through all our inspections was that it was very clear that these people not only misunderstood Summerhill, but many of them were strongly prejudiced against it when they came. So during the last few years, we have seen inspectors showing real anger towards us while they were in the process of inspecting us, which is a total unprofessional thing to do. The report itself also made many accusations against the school, which were totally unfounded. So the evidence that they had was very small. The notice of complaint had 6 items on it and we had to comply within a given time or they are able to strike the school off the register so it could no longer function as a school. They tell you what the complaint is and they tell you what the recommendation is. There were three that we felt we could comply with. One was to do with some floor covering that needed re-doing. One was to do with making sure there were more health and safety checks on the kids' rooms so the meeting elected a committee and they go every couple of weeks and they check out all the rooms. A local electrician has trained them. The other one concerned some problems we had in Class 2, which is what we call Key Stage 3: ten to twelve year olds. It's an age where anybody who is involved in democratic schools will know they tend not to want to go to class very much anyway; they want to be out doing exciting things. So we tried to see if we could improve the teaching facility and the general makeup of Class 2. We put together a really good package and we are very happy with the way things are going.

We contested one of the complaints, which was about good old toilets. Now, I know that's something of a joke and the rest of the world think that the Brits have got an obsession with toilets, and I think that they probably have. At Summerhill we live like a family; it's a boarding school so the community all lives in the school. We don't have separate toilets for boys, girls, or adults. The government said we had to have separate toilets for boys, girls, and adults. They've been telling us this since 1992, and we haven't done it. Every year we've written back and told them we're not prepared to do that and gave them our reasons. We have children's welfare and safety in hand through our democratic process and through the fact that the children know that they have a voice and that they can be heard. That was one of the big, contentious things and it sounds silly. People have said to me it's really petty, why not just put notices on the doors but it actually is a really important issue here. It's about our right to govern ourselves within our community, so we stuck out for that one.

The other one was about lessons. It didn't actually say in the complaint that we had to have compulsory lessons. What it actually said was we have to *ensure* the children are engaged in learning, either in timetabled lessons or in prescribed self-supported study programs. That word, *ensure* is a very short word but it actually had a lot of punch for us. When we got into court our lawyer spent almost a whole day talking to the witness for the other side and finding out exactly what they meant by this word, *ensure*. So that was the other one that we contested.

The last one was about assessment. In Summerhill, we only assess kids when they are in class, so if you go to class, we assume that you're ready to be assessed. Obviously, when someone is teaching you they need to be assessing you as they go along in order to teach you further. But if you don't go to class, we don't assess you. When you're not in class, you're your own person and that's fine and they don't like that. They demanded that we have better assessments and more full assessments.

JERRY: Of course, we assume that you don't give grades.

ZOE: No, in England you don't give grades anyway; you just do your final GCSE – the General Certificate of Secondary Education – exams. Most children take those at the age of 15, turning 16. They usually sit a number of them at once, between four and nine, and they cover most subjects. Then you have those certificates when you leave. But at Summerhill we take them staggered over several years. We take them at very different times, whenever the kid wants to, and some kids may never want to take any. It's completely optional.

JERRY: If they want to go on to college, they pretty much have to pass these, is that right?

ZOE: Yes they do, but this idea that you have to have 100 of them is a bit of a fallacy. What our kids often find is that if they want to go to college, they find out how many they will need, and they work hard on the ones that they need. They're evidence of your knowledge of a subject, but they are not evidence of your knowledge as a person.

JERRY: And Summerhill actually has an above-average rate of students passing these tests and going on to college...

ZOE: Well, our GCSE pass rate is higher than the national average, but I don't know how the national average compares with other independent schools. We never professed to be a school that you're going to send your kid to if you want them to be the most academic achieving. If they want to do that, that's great, and we have many students who pass lots of GCSEs and very happily go on to University and get good degrees. But we also have kids who don't want to do that, and that's fine with us too.

JERRY: We'll set the scene: the school has protested against two of the complaints and said they were not willing to comply with them, and said that if they run out of appeals, they would close the school. They have taken the government to court. Now the week comes, and the tribunal starts. What was that like?

ZOE: Well, obviously the school was very wound up and tense about the whole thing. We had a fantastic legal team. This is a process that all schools have a right to if they're not happy with the notice of complaint which they receive, but they don't get any funding to help fight it. So Summerhill had to raise money for this. We were represented in court by **Jeffrey Robertson**, QC, who is one of the world's most famous human rights lawyers. He's an Australian, and he's fought many cases against governments on human rights issues. We were very happy to have him on board. On Monday all the kids, the staff, the cook, and the cleaners came up to the courtroom. It was held in the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand in London, a very big, imposing building full of courtrooms. When they got to the courtroom, there wasn't enough room so the judge allowed the children to come and sit on the floor. The gallery was full and then there were kids all sitting down the aisles on the floor watching the case. The whole thing looked a bit like a Summerhill meeting, which was great.

JERRY: How old were those kids?

ZOE: Our very smallest ones didn't come, but I think the youngest one was probably 10.

JERRY: So these kids from 10 years old on came to the court. What was their behavior in the courtroom?

ZOE: Well, just fantastic. One of the boys was crying and some people were a bit upset, but basically they were all quiet and they listened and were attentive. They were really interested.

JERRY: What seemed to be the reaction of the court to having these kids in there?

ZOE: There was a very warm feeling from the bench; I think they liked it. I don't know whether the opposition liked it very much, but certainly our team really liked it. It was certainly an understanding. The judges had been to visit the school, as had the opposition. I think the judges had obviously felt how

important the meeting was; they attended one of our meetings. Obviously it was something they felt was important – the kids should be allowed to be there.

JERRY: So the Tribunal started that Monday. And how did that day go?

ZOE: The first witness on the stand was Michael Fitz, who is the Chief Registrar of Independent Schools. Jeffrey Robertson was cross-examining him and it was a very interesting process. Basically, the points that he was making were: first of all, what this word *ensure* means, because in an earlier draft which Ofsted (the Office of Standards of Education) had sent to the Secretary of State of the Department for Education recommended that we should have compulsory lessons. He had decided that he'd only ask us to *ensure* involvement in learning. So there was some difference of opinion between the Department for Education and Ofsted. So our QC spent a lot of time establishing with Michael Fitz exactly what the word *ensure* means. Of course, it became very clear that you cannot ensure something without making it compulsory.

JERRY: So that point was made. On the second day, what happened?

ZOE: It became very clear that although the government said they were not demanding that we change our philosophy, they very clearly were. On the second day Mr. Fitz was on the stand again for the whole day. Things were coming to light, for instance, the fact that Summerhill had been on a list called TBW: To Be Watched. There are 250 schools in the country on this TBW list, but none of the schools know they're on it. We knew we were being inspected every year but we didn't know that we were on a TBW list. That was something else that our QC was making real headway with in showing that the governments at the time had put Summerhill on this hit list and were intent on inspecting it every year. The judge seemed very unhappy about the idea that the school should be on this list without being aware that they're on it.

JERRY: Let's just talk about the final scene after two days of testimony in which the government's case was beginning to look pretty bad, what did they do?

ZOE: Their case was clearly crumbling and one's impression was that they didn't really want to get more witnesses on the stand. We hadn't even begun to give our evidence yet. They had read all our information; our evidence was very strong indeed. So after the first two days, they indicated to our counsel that they wanted to get into discussions for settlement. The point is, with an Independent Schools Tribunal they don't have very much power. They have the power to close the school immediately, they have the power to annul the notice of complaint but that's the only power they have. They can't give you anything. They can't make any kind of guidelines or anything else. In the settlement that we finally agreed to, we had many more safety areas in place which will be backed up by our lawyers in the future as well. Part of that clause has been to recognize that Summerhill has a different philosophy and that it can follow its own philosophy. It says here "The government concedes that Neill's philosophy must henceforth govern Ofsted's approach to the school. It will not subject the school to another full inspection for at least four years." And most dramatically for children's rights, "It accepts the pupils' voice should be fully represented in any evaluation of the quality of education at Summerhill." It also agrees that "learning is not confined to lessons and acknowledges the right of children not to attend them." Those things are written into the agreement that we have. Obviously the Tribunal would not have been able to give us those things.

JERRY: They came up with this proposal and then it was supposed to be decided by a democratic school meeting of Summerhill. And where did that meeting take place?

ZOE: Our legal people asked the judges if we could use the courtroom to have one of our general school meetings. As they had visited and knew the importance of the meetings, they agreed to do that. The court was cleared, the judges went out -- I mean we're talking about a *very* formal courtroom here in the *Royal Courts of Justice* in London! The chair of the meeting went and sat in the judge's chair, and her vice chair and secretary sat on either side of her.

JERRY: And the chair is how old?

ZOE: She's just 15...she's an experienced chair at school. We read the press statement and then we vote on whether the people who had been put outside – not the judges, obviously – would be allowed in. One of them was actually one of the school inspectors. It was still carried that she should come in as well. There was one inspector and two of their solicitors who actually came into the courtroom. The school voted that they could come in and listen to the rest of the meeting. Then Jeffrey Robertson, our QC, read out the terms of the agreement. Lots of the Summerhill kids and staff asked him questions about it and when he'd answered them sufficiently one of the pupils proposed that we would accept these terms. And it was carried unanimously. At one point the court usher had to come in and ask us if we could be quiet because when v

read out the agreement the children and everybody all cheered shouted. She came and said, "Look, I'm really sorry, but there's a family court case going on next door." So everybody said they were sorry and were quiet. Then the judges came back in again and the court was back in session. The treasury solicitor who was our opponent read out the terms of the agreement and the judges acknowledged that this was good for them and then the whole courtroom came to a close.

PHOTO

Use 15 tif from AERO 28, Just the girl on the right side.

Caption: Carmen, 15, who chaired the meeting here in the *Royal Courts of Justice* in London

JERRY: I gather that they agreed to pay some of your expenses, which was something that they would not have been required to do.

ZOE: Yes, the problem with these Independent Tribunals is that you don't get any costs paid, but on the other hand you're never liable for the opponents costs either. So really what they made was donation to the school because it was very little; it was just a small gift rather than any kind of compensation for the amount that we spent. I think it was just another sign that they were wrong and that we won the case.

JERRY: Well, this has been cheered all over the world. Summerhill has had a list serve of former students and so on; it's been fascinating to watch. Everyone was so excited – people as far away as New Zealand and Australia were watching this case. I want to talk about what you think the significance of this decision is for education in England and around the world because I think it's very important and has a connection with the standards movement that is happening here in the United States. What do you think is the significance of this decision for other schools?

ZOE: Well, I think that when a legal case like this comes about, it's written in cement in a way. It's written legally, it's important, and it is not something that people can just pretend didn't happen. It was a benchmark. I think that on many planes, the fact that a school has been able to challenge Ofsted and the Department for Education and has won is really important. That applies to countries all over the world with their education authorities. Also, for children's rights it's of huge importance because now the children have actually gotten it written into this agreement that the children shall be listened to. The inspectors never shut down and had discussions with the kids about how they felt about their school. So the kids felt very disempowered by it all.

JERRY: One of the things that was established from this is that learning takes place all the time and not necessarily just in classes.

ZOE: That's right. One of the things that we're really anxious to show here is that they have to look at the whole Summerhill picture. The things you learn, as well, are not necessarily the things they would expect to be the most important. What we have written into this agreement is that when we have inspections, we can have our own independent report written as well. And they have to take account of that.

JERRY: When I went to the New York State Alternative Education Association, a lot of the schools were complaining that the Commissioner of Education for NYS had turned down their request for a continuing waiver from the NYS Regents tests. I announced the Summerhill victory and said, "You know, what you really have to do is stand up to these bullies and hopefully you'll be able to get the same kind of results."

ZOE: I think the sad thing about it from the point of view of bureaucracy and government is that Summerhill is very lucky because Summerhill's very very famous. Whereas another small school just has to shut up and do as it's told because they haven't got those resources and they haven't got the years and fame that Summerhill has. It's a tragedy.

JERRY: One of the things that we're talking about on the list serve is establishing an international SWAT team and a fund to help schools that may be in a similar situation.

ZOE: Good idea. We had a great end of term party last night!

JERRY: Oh, I bet it was great!

AERO NEEDS FEEDBACK FROM YOU!

AERO has been challenged by a potential funder to demonstrate its effectiveness in working toward educational change. We'd like to ask all readers of this issue of *The Education Revolution* to write a paragraph or two about and help which AERO has provided to you in the past. It could simply be help from things you have read on the listserve we manage. It could be from things you've read or networking resulting from reading the magazine. Or it could be more direct help, such as finding a job, getting staff or resources for your school, or getting information about how to start homeschooling. Please send your response to jerryaero@aol.com. You can also indicate if you were disappointed in our services. Of course this is just anecdotal information, but will be extremely helpful. AERO needs this support to keep going and growing. Also, let us know if you have other ideas about how to measure AERO's effect, or ideas about how AERO can be more effective.

AERO RECEIVES THREE GRANTS

AERO has recently received three wonderful grants to help us continue our work. They are from the **New Visions Foundation**, the **Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation**, and the **O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundations**. These will be used, among other things, to develop our website, build up the alumni association, help people create homeschool resource centers, get AERO developmental consultation, get new computer equipment, employ a professional grant writer, and give support and transportation money to democratic schools in developing countries so they can attend the International Democratic Education Conference this July in Tokyo.

PHOTO #2 Kageki with students from Tokyo Shure, which is organizing the International Democratic Education Conference this July in Tokyo.

PHOTO #7 Parents at AERO homeschool resource center presentation in New York City

Mail and Communications

Seattle-based **International Youth Hall of Fame® (IYHF)** has been named a Daily Point of Light by the Points of Light Foundation for March 9, 2000. IYHF builds developmental assets by helping communities come together to recognize, celebrate, encourage, document and publicize the positive efforts of everyday youth who are making a difference at home, in school and in the community. IYHF is not a competition; rather, it seeks to find the best in all youth. Beginning in September 2000, IYHF will launch their On The Road With Kids Tour. Following in the "tire tracks" of famed correspondent, Charles Kuralt, the IYHF is equipped with a digital video studio and web broadcasting will travel to rural and urban communities around the country starting IYHF Chapters and recognizing and publicizing 2000 youth. For more information, contact **Larry Sagen**, International Youth Hall of Fame, PMB #201, 300 Queen Anne Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109. Website: www.youthhall.org. Tel: (206) 623-6770. Fax: (206) 623-6648.

Paths of Learning: Options for Families and Communities is published by **The Foundation for Educational Renewal**, a nonprofit founded by President **Ron Miller**. The latest issue features an update on the Summerhill crisis, articles on homeschooling and partnership education, an interview with **Alfie Koh** and a review of **John Taylor Gatto's** as yet unpublished new book, and much more. 420 McKinley St., Suite 111-437, Corona, CA 92879-6504. Tel: (909) 549-9067.

After five months of intense research, design, and development, the online **Paths of Learning Resource Center** is officially open to the public. The Center contains summaries of over 250 innovative educational publications. It is a free online tool for anyone making decisions about education—choosing between student-centered alternatives, seeking more ways to nourish different learning styles, or wanting to know more about social/political issues involved with systemic change in education. Sponsored by the Foundation for Educational Renewal, the Center has been developed in tandem with the new Paths Of Learning magazine. Coordinator **Robin Martin** has written to dozens of authors, schools, and small publishers in an effort to make sure all information is as current and accurate as possible. For parents and students, the Paths of Learning Resource Center helps locate resources for facing tough decisions about finding creative, learner-centered options for meeting their unique needs. For teachers, it offers resources with ideas on programs and teaching methods to encourage more creativity and individuality while fostering a dynamic classroom community. For school board members or administrators, it can help locate solid evidence for how to implement new programs or restructure schools in ways that better fit how students learn while maintaining their natural curiosity and love of life. For alternative educators and schools, it offers a voice in the changing world so that books, videos, and other publications about their schools can be more widely known. Web: <http://www.PathsOfLearning.net>; Email: info@PathsOfLearning.net

The Catalog of Volunteer Opportunities provides information about organizations looking for volunteer including high school students and recent graduates, for a wide variety of programs. The catalog gives each organization's geographical area served, skills needed and contact information. It is available from the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, PO Box 117, New York, NY 10009.

According to **Lon Woodbury** in **The Developing Education Network**, "A 1999 survey reported that as many as 25% of American school children are currently in some kind of non-traditional education arrangement: either homeschooling, charter schools, religious and secular private day schools, traditional private boarding schools, private pay emotional growth schools and programs, therapeutic schools and programs, public alternative schools, school choice, etc." This "reflects a powerful cultural movement among educators and parents to explore better options for educating our young." As a result, more parents are turning to independent educational consultants for help in sifting through the growing number of choices they now have available to them. This, in turn, is causing existing educational consulting organizations to rethink their missions, as well as the creation of new organizations. This information is from *Places for Struggling Teens* Issue #65. Address below.

Also in *Places for Struggling Teens*, Issue, 67: A review by Carol Maxym of a book called *Your Drug May Be Your Problem: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications* by P. Breggin & D. Cohen. The authors challenge the assertions made by the pharmaceutical and medical fields that psychiatric drugs help patients with mental, emotional, and psychiatric problems, and maintain that they may actually be the cause of some of these patients' problems. Often, they say, "physicians, psychiatrists, and therapists mistake the effect of the medication to be a further indication that a higher dosage is needed...these drugs, not the patients' mental stability (or lack thereof) are causing the problem." **Woodbury Reports**, PO Box 1107, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805. Tel: (208) 267-5550.

"We are about to witness an astonishing event. We shall enter the next century with the same basic mode of learning with which we entered this one. It is like basing today's transport policy on the horse-drawn carriage," proclaim the editors of *Education Now* in "Where did it All Go Wrong?" One of the many ways it went wrong is that in the several years since Howard Gardner established the existence of multiple intelligences, the school system continues to focus on one or two, "thus preventing the development of an assortment of achievements in the learning population. Modern brain research has been exposing many of the assumptions of mass schooling as false. The brain is a pattern-making organ rather than a pattern-receiving entity. We see this in action when young children learn their mother tongue, not by formal instruction but by interaction with the people and the world around them. The brain generates one set of chemicals when in a passive mode that makes it cautious and defensive. In an active, decision-making mode

it generates other chemicals which stimulate speedy and creative learning. Then, if the brain's cooperative disposition is not encouraged, it gets replaced; e.g., by selfish competition." Address below.

Also from *Education Now*, **Roland Meighan** states in "Wanted! A New Vocabulary for Learning," that "the old vocabulary and thinking has to go if we are to achieve a learning culture, a learning society, and habits necessary for genuine, lifelong learning." The terms that have to go include: 'School,' which once meant a "voluntary association of learners" but which now means (quoting Philip Jackson) "for all the children some of the time, and for some other children all the time, the classroom resembles a cage from which there is no escape". 'Curriculum,' which has come to mean "an imposed course study so dehumanized that all the key decisions about what to learn, when to learn, and how to learn, have been (made) before any of the learners have been met and encountered as people". 'Education,' which has become "a paper chase, a diploma disease". And finally, "officialdom's favorite word, 'Standards,' which means training students to be good at the shallow learning of selected mechanical tasks enshrined in institutionally imposed syllabuses; i.e., junk knowledge." Meighan defines 'junk knowledge' as "something you did not need or want to know yesterday, do not need or want to know today, and are unlikely to need want to know tomorrow." Education Now, 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ.

Summarizing his philosophy of self-education applied to the workplace, **Charles D. Hayes** has written a little book called, *Training Yourself: The 21st Century Credential*. The author, a high school dropout, is self-taught philosopher who joined the marines at 17, became a police officer, and has worked for over 21 years in the oil industry. In his book, he offers practical advice on how to both *earn* and *enjoy* a good living. "The exponential growth of computer technology has cut the jugular of standardization. Industrialized education has reached the end of its life – it's just taking a long time to bleed to death," he says. "Mastery learning strategies will be available for anyone to learn anything, to achieve whatever level of expertise they desire, in whatever amount of time seems reasonable ... If education becomes a *very* individualized thing then individuals will be in charge of their own learning." The book is available from Autodidactic Press, Box 872749, Wasilla, AK 99687. Tel: (907) 376-3058.

Two new books by **Don Glines** have recently been published. The first is *Reflecting Year-Round Education: Traditions and Innovations*, which discusses the philosophy and basics of year-round schooling, and then focuses on innovation and changes which can create individualized continuous learning programs now. The second is *Year-Round Education: Paths to Resources* with David Mussatti, which documents the 100-year history of YRE by analyzing the events of each twenty-year period from 1900-2000. They are available from NAYRE, PO Box 711386, San Diego, CA 92171-1386. Tel: (619) 571-57

In the revolutionary new book, *A General Theory of Love*, by **Dr. Thomas Lewis, Dr. Fari Amini** and **Richard Lannon**, the authors draw on new scientific discoveries that prove what mothers have known instinctively since the beginning of time: love is paramount to their child's life-long success.

Dr. Lewis: Modern American values demand early independence in our children and portray reliance on others as a weakness, but science is discovering that our cultural emphasis on separateness is unhealthy, because our brains are wired for togetherness. It is the natural condition for which our bodies and brains are designed—the condition they require, in fact, to function normally. Nowhere is this natural dependence more evident than in our children, whose fragile bodily rhythms need the stabilization that parents provide. Research shows, for instance, that mothers regulate the nocturnal brain and body rhythms of infants when the two sleep in close proximity. The U.S. has the highest rate of sudden infant death in the world. Our habit of forcing early separation between parents and children may be an important reason why this is so. A young child's nighttime reliance on parents to regulate bodily rhythms is just one example of a broader rule: healthy independence comes from satiating dependence, not forbidding it.

The division between knowledge and wisdom is ancient and very real. Neuroscientists now know that there are two separate learning systems in the brain—one that supports the explicit learning of facts, and another that supports the acquisition of intuitions from experience. Our Western society strongly promotes the utility and importance of fact-based learning, and often dismisses intuition as imaginary or inconsequential. The thinking or cognitive brain (very powerful and advanced in human beings) learns from facts. But the

emotional brain (far older than the thinking brain) learns only through the intuition-based brain system, not the fact-based knowledge system. If we wish to raise wise children, therefore, we must not neglect the second half of their education.

We should be alarmed at the enormous amount of time our children are spending in the company of computers (as well as television, videos, and computer games). Computers do not deliver an emotional connection, but they do keep kids occupied and reasonably quiet while they're not getting what they need from parents. And that's the danger. Several studies have shown that computer use in adults actually causes depression and loneliness, because it takes people away from the emotionally nourishing time they spend with family and friends. Children are almost certainly more vulnerable to this effect than adults are. However enticing their entertainment value, mechanical companions are simply unworkable relationship substitutes for adults and children alike. And that makes the current push to place computers and the Internet in every classroom disturbing, to say the least. Ensuring the presence of at least one attentive adult in every learning environment would be infinitely more valuable. Many children already do not receive the individualized attention they need from an adult in the classroom. Increasing the emphasis on computer learning can only further decrease the time available for human contact--to our children's great detriment.

Robert Theobald, pioneering futurist, died on Saturday November 27th, 1999. Robert Theobald's biographical information is available online at <http://www.transform.org/transform/tlc/rtbio.html>. Other information is available upon request if you are writing an article, feature story or obituary for Robert. The work that Robert and many others have been committed to will continue – in new forms and new shapes, be sure. Stay tuned for further announcements. Bob Stilger, Executive Director, Northwest Regional Facilitators, East 525 Mission Avenue, Spokane, WA 99202. Tel: (509) 484 6733, ext 139. Fax: (509) 483 3045. Email: rstilger@nrf.org

The **Ecovillage** Research, Development & Demonstration Program's website is at: <http://www.siriuscommunity.org/LR/rdd.html>. This program will link universities and ecovillages in cooperative research, development, and demonstration projects in Appropriate Technologies, Renewable Energy and Permaculture Practices. **The Living Routes** - Ecovillage Education Consortium web site has recently been upgraded. See: <http://www.LivingRoutes.org>. They have openings in their Summer Institute in Sustainable Living in Ithaca, NY. This 6-week program is a way for students to learn sustainability in the context of intentional communities at a reasonable cost, and earn college credit. Web: www.siriuscommunity.org/LR/SummerInstitute.html. Email: info@LivingRoutes.org.

The **Geo Communities Semester**, formerly known as Geocommons College Program, is a semester-long journey into ecology, community, and mindful living. Students and faculty spend ten days at a Buddhist monastery in southwest France; two months in southern India at an ecovillage and spiritual community; and ten days at a Gandhian community promoting village renewal. The **Findhorn Community Semester** program in sustainable living weaves together experiential study of community, creative spirituality, and ecology through a living/learning immersion in life at the Findhorn Foundation in northern Scotland. Sixteen semester credits are available through Pacific Lutheran University. The **Crystal Waters Permaculture Practicum** is a three-week course that looks at human interaction as an ecology of organisms in a complex web of interrelationships. Most of the course is spent at Crystal Waters, a well-established Permaculture Community on 640 acres in Queensland, Australia. The hands-on curriculum addresses the environmental and social challenges of our day and enables students to gain direct experience in the application of Permaculture principles in addressing those challenges. Four semester credits are available through Pacific Lutheran University. For more information, contact Living Routes at 72 Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072. Tel: (888) 515-7333. Email: info@livingroutes.org.

We are a publisher of wall maps and have 100's of maps we would like to donate to alternative education "classrooms". Do you have any idea of any organization that might provide funding/grants for the shipping charges? Take a look at our site if you like at www.ravenmaps.com. Any help you may have to offer would be appreciated. Thanks! info@ravenmaps.com

The Fellowship for Intentional Community's **Communities Directory 2000** and its companion video, **Visions of Utopia: Intentional Communities**, are now available. These essential reference tools are for anyone involved in or interested in exploring Community. The Directory includes listings of more than 6 Intentional Communities in the US, feature articles, maps, charts, and resources. The two-hour video includes profiles of 18 communities, coverage of the people and their daily lives, exploration of the 'glue that holds communities together, what works and what doesn't, and a brief history of shared living. Directory/Communities, 138-EB Twin Oaks Road, Louisa, VA 23093. Tel: (800) 462-8240. Fax: (540) 84112. Web: <http://www.ic.org/fic/cdir/order.html>

Thanks to an AERolist member who reminded us that the **Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation** promotes school vouchers and helps to establish private voucher initiatives in many states in the US. They also have a series of pamphlets that tell the history of the voucher movement and offer a lot of insightful arguments in favor of school choice. They have a website at www.friedmanfoundation.org.

A 16-year-old student of the **Puget Sound Community School**, John-Michael Spangler, wrote an article called "A Week in the Life of a PSCS Student." In it he describes his week of activities at the school. Monday's tutorial was 'Horse Race Handicapping' in which students learn to keep a balance sheet. Tuesday's field trip was swimming, a favorite activity. Wednesday marked the beginning of a new community service project. Thursday was the day John does his apprenticeship program at the Raptor Center at Woodland Park Zoo. Friday was another tutorial, this one in origami. Then he made plans for a discussion class he was giving on the meaning of life. He concludes with: "Did I mention I love school? I need to?" The article is available from PSCS, PO Box 51026, Seattle, WA 98115. Web: www.pscs.org.

Note from CM: Jerry did a consultation with this family and arranged for the son to go to the Meeting School, in Rindge, NH. This is an update on their progress:

"Just got our double issue of *The Education revolution* and cannot wait to sit and read. Thanks for all you do. I love it and recommend it every chance I get. Sequoia is a senior at TMS now. During intersession, he visited a few intentional communities...Sirius, Agape...and then did the Darma Peace walk for a week. He traveled down to the Appalachian Trail and hiked. He visited with some other students and camped out and stayed in budget well. No problems...even though at times I felt worried...the mother thing. But he communicated well and is doing amazing; so mature and grown up. He is graduating this year. O Jerry. Walk in gratitude for this day -- June 11 -- to you and so many others. Know that you are in our thoughts the work you do is never forgotten. It is the big healing work of the planet...raising up peacemakers like Sequoia. Helene Van Manen."

Thank you, Helene, for your wonderful letter. We are delighted to hear how well Sequoia is doing! Our continued best wishes to you!

THREE SUPPORT LETTERS

"I can't tell you how much I enjoy the aerolist. It is a lifeline to me here in ultra-conservative Reno. Betw the AERolist and **Andy Smallman's** gang at **Puget Sound Community School**, I find the strength to keep jousting at this windmill." From Hank "Quixote" Sosnowski. Email: M.Hatta@att.net.

"Jerry, I've been meaning to get back to you and tell you how seriously impressed I was with the slick lit mag you're putting out! Good stuff. So good I lost it somewhere here in the house walking around reading it... Too much reading material, not enough house I spoze." From **Mary McCarthy**. Email: hslrawa@sandwich.net.

"Hi Jerry, I find the **IDEC** communication fantastic and so informative & interesting for me. Not only for the **Summerhill** updates but it's so wonderful to see how democracy and independent education is interpreted and put into play in other parts of the world. Thanks so much! It's because of your kindness & extra effort that I get this e-mail! Two of the people on the "contact list" may have their students become pen pals with my photo and journal-writing students. I can't wait for this to begin. Thanks for your effort with IDEC, best of luck with all your projects!" From Denise.

Book Reviews

Challenging Assumptions in Education

I have just published my long-awaited sequel to the best selling book *Revolution in Public Education* based on my 25 years experience with home-based learning. Subtitled “From Institutionalized Education to a Learning Society”, it encourages both individuals and policy makers to work towards demolishing the one-size-fits-all, industrialized model of processing and warehousing students. In its place I propose a community-based, individualized learning society, which would accommodate learners of all ages, interests, abilities and styles.

Here’s a quote from the back cover: “Our outdated assumptions about how children learn are crippling both our young people and our collective well-being. Only by challenging these assumptions will we be able to replace a system that is not relevant to the lives of today’s young people. We must give up on the hierarchical, coercive, mass market, industrial model of education because it impedes learning and enslaves children. Then we need to create opportunities and infrastructures that respect children as individuals, that help them learn, and that equip them to meet the immense economic, social and environmental challenges of this century.” *Challenging Assumptions in Education* was launched at Home Learning Conference 2000, presented by The Home Based Learning Network at the University of Ottawa on April 29. Details and ordering information for the book are available at <http://www.life.ca/books/cae.html>. I am also available to speak at conferences; details can be found at <http://www.life.ca/assumptions>. Wendy Priesnitz, founder of Canadian Alliance of Home Schoolers, editor of Natural Life magazine, <http://www.life.ca>, 1-800-215-9574, wendy@life.ca

And the Skylark Sings With Me: Adventures in Homeschooling and Community Based Education, by David Albert (reviewed by Michelle Senzon)

This is a fantastic book for home educators and learners of all ages. Albert tells the stories of his family's journey of learning and the many ways they supplemented their education by participating in community events and by searching out passionate, knowledgeable teachers for their two daughters, Meera and Ali. The modern movement, from the individual homeschooling family to Community-Based Learning is the next step in progressive education. David Albert and his family are at the forefront of the movement. *And the skylark Sings With Me* is an exceptional guide and support for homeschoolers as they go forth on the boundless journey of learning. People can read a sample chapter at www.skylarksings.com

Doing it Their Way: home-based Education and Autonomous Learning, by Jan Fortune-Wood

Autonomous Education allows children and young people to develop the lifelong habit of being self-directed and intrinsically motivated learners. This is a process that looks remarkably unlike anything we expect to see from our schools.

This book is a bit more academically analytical than other recent homeschool books, perhaps because, although homeschooling four children in England, Jan is an Episcopal parish priest in Birmingham. I think it provides a perspective not often seen, of great interest.

Three years ago I had a very nice time visiting the Fortune-Wood family when speaking to a group in Birmingham interested in flexi-schooling.

Reviews by Steve Rosenthal:

PHOTO: #1 Steve Rosewntal, Director of information and Communication, in AERO off

The Democratic Classroom

Art Pearl and Tony Knight's argument for a democratic classroom is based on the premise that "the world is faced with difficult problems that can not be solved without democratic process." School should prepare every person to be an informed and responsible democratic citizen.

The majority of the book is dedicated to an explanation of the four attributes of a democratic classroom.

1) Knowledge that students need to solve important problems should be available to all students.

"In order for everyone to accept the definition of important knowledge, everyone need to be involved in the debate over the definition."

2) The classroom should be run democratically.

"One can only learn to be a democratic citizen by practicing democratic citizenship.

Presently nowhere is democratic citizenship less respected than in school. Nowhere is disrespect for democracy more consistently taught by practice and policy than in school. In the great majority of classrooms students know that the teacher is the boss and whatever she/he says goes."

3) Four "inalienable" rights should be guaranteed to all students-expression, privacy, due process and movement.

4) Everyone should have a fair share of the classroom resources and the school should ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve success.

The last part of *The Democratic Classroom* explains how a teacher can be prepared to teach in such a classroom. Throughout the book the authors suggest various ways of bringing democracy into the classroom: Encourage everyone to be a leader, try out different forms of democracy, allow youth culture and personal problems into the classroom. With *The Democratic Classroom* Pearl and Knight offer more than 300 pages of theory for democratic education. ***The Democratic Classroom*** is published by Hampton Press, Inc., Cresskill, NJ.

***Educating Children at Home* by Alan Thomas**

This book is based on the experiences of a hundred home educating families. The author finds that "all children make an incredible amount of intellectual progress during the first few years of life with little deliberate teaching." What's more conversational, non-sequential and incidental learning continue to be effective well into the school-age years.

Taking a special look at literacy and social development the author concludes that parents "utilizing what seemed to work best with each child." produced competent readers and homeschooling "does not appear to hamper the acquisition of social skills."

Homeschooling parents will no doubt recognize themselves in the many case histories documented in *Educating Children at Home* and feel reassured.

Educating Children at Home is published by Cassell.

***High Tech Heretic* by Clifford Stoll**

This book focuses to a great extent on the computer in the classroom. He feels that "high school graduate, intent on going to college should be able to use a word processor, manipulate a spreadsheet...and browse the World Wide Web. [But doesn't] need to be able to program spreadsheets or lay out databases," since software is so soon outdated. He points out that throughout the twentieth century inventors and futurists have claimed the new technologies would revolutionize the classroom.

In 1922 Edison prophesied that "the motion picture...will supplant...textbooks."

In 1945, William Levenson wrote in *Teaching Through Radio* "A portable radio receiver be as common in the classroom as is the blackboard."

"A campus with no library" was proposed by California State University Chancellor Barry Munitz in 1995 since computers would soon replace books.

Probably Stoll's greatest concern is that wiring schools comes at the expense of other resources. Schools drop art and music to pay for computers. A new teacher isn't hired to free up money for the Internet. Hands-on experiential teaching is replaced by computer simulations. During these days of Internet ecstasy a cautionary look at computers may seem outrageous. However, the engagement is the best time to take a critical look at the likely outcome of a marriage.

High Tech Heretic is published by Doubleday.

***Standardized Minds* by Peter Sack**

In 1983 *A Nation at Risk: Imperative for Education Reform* claimed "the educational foundation of our society is presently being eroded." This conclusion was based on the results of standardized tests. The premise of *Standardized Minds* is that standardized tests are a poor predictor of a person's performance.

"Your father's occupation is a better predictor of SAT scores than virtually any other factor."

Furthermore these tests do much more harm than giving misleading results. Low standardized test scores convince kids that they will never succeed and cause them to be ostracized by their friends. Schools are motivated to teach to the tests, allow kids bring tests home and give out answers in class. The country as a whole wastes millions of dollars on standardized tests. In 1997 America spent \$200 million in public schools twice as much as they spent ten years earlier.

Real education reform will begin when America gives up its addiction to measurement and focuses on helping kids learn.

Standardized Minds is published by Perseus Books, Cambridge, MA.

***An "A" in Life: Famous Home Schoolers,*
by Mac and Nancy Plent**

If anyone ever says to you, "Homeschooling! Your children won't amount to anything if they don't go to school!" give them a copy of *An "A" in Life: Famous Home Schoolers*.

Seventeen presidents of the United States were homeschooled including Abraham Lincoln. Over 100 actors, entrepreneurs, inventors, singers and writers were also

homeschooled. Woody Allen, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, Irving Berlin and Robert Frost are all listed in this book.

The simple fact is that public education in the U.S. has only been around for about 150 years.

Spiced up with stories like how Mrs. Edison took her son out of school after only three months when she found out his teacher used a leather strap, *An "A" in Life* is a real pick-me-up for those days when you're wondering if you are doing the right thing. It can be ordered from the Unschoolers Network, 2 Smith St, Farmingdale, NJ 07727.

Home Education News

Learning Without Lessons, By Sherry Parmet, UNION-TRIBUNE, March 26, 2000

While thousands of kids throughout California are subjected to testing on a regimented set of rigorous state standards, members of a growing, largely unknown movement of parents such as Anita Peterson believe their children learn best when left alone to learn what they want, when they want -- or nothing at all. That is not to say they aren't learning. They are absorbing knowledge all the time, but they just are not constrained by grade-level expectations or lesson plans, Peterson said.

She subscribes to an unorthodox style of learning called "**unschooling**," which first gained prominence in the 1970s. Educator John Holt, who coined the term, believed children should learn at their own pace by following their own interests so that they form a love for learning, rather than fighting the process. Unschooling differs from traditional homeschooling and classroom schooling in that parents typically teach without using lesson plans, schedules or any other obvious structure. Instead, the world is their classroom. William Lloyd, researcher for the National Home Education Research Institute, said some unschoolers lag behind their traditional home-schooled counterparts initially, but in the long run they excel.

Six-year-old Aaron Peterson doesn't use textbooks or take tests. He doesn't go to school, and at home his mother doesn't make demands. She wouldn't dream of ordering him to memorize vocabulary words or do pen and paper math. Or write or read. But somehow he's learning -- soaking up knowledge like a thirsty sponge.

Researcher Lloyd estimated that of the 1.7 million homeschoolers nationwide about 15 percent -- 255,000 -- are unschoolers. There is little statistical evidence on how many parents teach their children the way or at what level these youngsters achieve. But there are unschooling organizations with a growing membership in every state in the nation, and probably more than 100 unschoolers in San Diego County. Unschooling, Lloyd said, resists the notion of the parent as the expert possessing all the knowledge. Instead the parent acts as a co-learner, and the children learn to teach themselves.

Critics say there are gaps in the unschooling system that could cheat a child of an education. Mary Leppert, publisher of *The Link*, a Newbury Park-based newspaper for homeschoolers with a nationwide circulation of 100,000, said she hears too often about unschooled teen-agers lacking basic skills. "I've just seen how a lot of the kids end up feeling confused and frustrated because they don't know what to do with their time," she said. "I don't think it's going to kill a kid's creativity to force them to do some cursive writing or to learn their multiplication tables."

California does not have a law specifically authorizing home-schooling. However, children are allowed to learn at home if they are taught by a parent or a tutor with a teaching credential, said Carolyn Pirillo, deputy general counsel for the state Department of Education. Many unschoolers and other home-schoolers file a "private school affidavit" that establishes the home as a private school and requires no credentialed teacher. No testing requirements are imposed by the state. It's up to the parents to log their kids' activities for college entrance officials. At that point, many unschoolers will take the Scholastic Assessment Test. It's not uncommon for unschooling parents to hire tutors if their children want them, and for unschooling teen-agers to enroll in community college courses.

A flood of unschooling Web sites on the Internet highlight colleges that have admitted unschoolers, such as Harvard, Brown and Brigham Young. Other listings note schools with an unschooling bent. One is Hampshire College, where, theoretically, students could graduate without taking a single course. There are no letter grades but rather summary narratives. And there are few of the typical introductory classes such

English 101 or U.S. history that pack the schedules of most college freshmen. "Our president is fond of saying you can do anything at Hampshire, provided that you can persuade two faculty," said Audrey Smi director of admissions at the accredited liberal arts college in Amherst, Mass., which has 1,150 students.

We have started a homeschooling co-op/community learning center on a shoestring, with about 10 families so far and growing. It is in a central location, and at a free rec center for the moment. Not perfect, but a place to start. Had the first meeting where the kids got to make a list of classes, clubs & activities they wanted to have; and they will run the next meeting. They (and I) are a little confused as to exactly how to move from where we are to where we want to be...and a few parents think the kids can't run it without them...but here we go! I'll keep you posted. I would like to order the video you have on running democratic meetings. I definitely need more education to help this process along. You and Aero have been most helpful...I hope you are still there! **Norma Andes**, 30375 Colosse Road, Carrsville, VA 23315.

"In this experiment, I have watched a group of children educate themselves in a far superior manner than could have done for them if I had spent every waking hour teaching them in the usual manner. I am convinced that, had I done so, their progress would have been far less," says **Dr. Arthur Robinson** on his family's enormous homeschooling success. All of their six children have been entirely homeschooled, even after the death of Lauree, Arthur's wife, and Arthur attempted to take on the role of teacher. What evolved from there was a system largely created by the children that needed no teacher and was extraordinarily effective. The article, "My Children Teach Themselves," first published in 1984, and Robinson's Self-Teaching Curriculum are available from Oregon Institute of Science & Medicine, 2251 Dick George Road, Cave Junction, OR 97523.

Cheryl Lindsey Seelhoff compares and contrasts the homeschooling support groups that existed prior to 1983 to those that have emerged since then in her article "Who Stole Homeschooling?" Cheryl says that the earlier groups were far more inclusive, supportive, and relationship-focused than the latter, which were primarily launched by conservative Christian groups. A Christian herself, Cheryl laments today's "exclusive, hierarchical homeschooling groups in which membership is strictly controlled, with homeschooling itself often held hostage to group definitions." While there are still good groups, leaders, support, they are becoming increasingly hard to find. "Homeschooling parents who are simply interested in the lives of their children and who are motivated only by what is best for those children, rarely, if ever, have the time, or the stomach for immersing themselves in the frenetic religious and political machinery which now drive the modern homeschooling movement. Their hearts belong to their children, and their children's children, and the children of others whose lives they touch." This article appeared in ***The Link – A Homeschool Newspaper***, PMB 911, 587 N. Ventu Park Rd., Suite F, Newbury Park, CA 91320.

Legislation concerning homeschoolers in a bill put before the General Assembly of Kentucky proposes that a written declaration of intent to homeschool will be required of parents, that teachers of homeschoolers will be required to have a high school diploma, that students must take the state's standardized tests, and that the place where the home study program is carried out will, at all times, be open to inspection by state officials. This bill is being vehemently opposed by the Kentucky Home Education Association, which believes it violates parents' equal protection of the law under the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. This information was reported in ***Thousandsticks News*** by Owen Morgan, PO Box 917, Hyden, KY 41749.

The **Self-Education Foundation** is "building a movement to support self-education and self-advocacy by strategically funding inspired community-based efforts." From "How We Got Started" by **Billy Winsatt**, Co-Director: "I send out a letter outlining my ideas for the foundation and asking for \$2,000 in contributions, which I promised to match. Out of those 500 letters, six donations came in, totaling \$260. Six came from people under 25" With Emily Nepon, they started the foundation and decided to send \$100 each of 12 diverse groups, using mostly their own money. At about that time, they were contacted by Karl Muth who told them he had raised more than \$3,000 on his own for the foundation, unbeknownst to Billy and Emily ... Karl is 17! The groups this foundation supports are ones that they deem "the best in the country

Because self-education is the most powerful and most cost-effective form of education. because people n to control their own lives. Because institutions need to change, and these tiny groups are some of the pioneers who are turning this upside-down education system on its head... We are talent scouts for the se education revolution and we need your commitment, your investment, your imagination, your support. Tl future is ours. Put your faith in us.” The Self-Education Foundation, PO Box 30790, Philadelphia, PA 19104-0790. Web: www.selfeducation.org.

North Star homeschool resource center has been very successful in its first year; however, the founders : planning on closing down at the beginning of June. They are hoping, though, that this will not be the end North Star. There may be someone who is looking for an opportunity to start a full time, elementary age alternative school and run it as a democratic, non-coercive school. For more information, contact Kara WillowBrook at WillowWake@integrityl.com.

John & Kathy Perry are homeschooling parents and authors of **The Complete Guide to Homeschoolir** due out in August. Currently, they are researching information for their newest book that will feature individual stories from successful homeschooling graduates across the country. They have prepared a sur for the graduates to answer, along with information on how they can reach them. They need to contact as many graduates as possible over the next few months to give this project the attention it deserves. Write t them at 1230 Carriage, Richmond, TX 77469. Email: Perry4390@aol.com

A new documentary by **Fernanda Rossi** about homeschooling called **Inventing a Girl** is available now. The film takes an “informed and intimate look at the daily life of a nine-year-old girl who has never been school... This documentary not only increases public knowledge of homeschooling, but also helps those families looking for alternative ways to educate their children.” –William Sanchez, Producer, WNJN, NJ For more, visit: www.inventingagirl.com/released.html.

Public Alternatives

Charter School News

From *Bellweather*: Arizona Charter Schools

In 1999 about 35,000 Arizona students attended charter schools, about 4.5 percent of the total public school student population. Twenty-five new charter schools opened, and though a few are struggling, on one closed its doors. For the most part it was a good year for Arizona charter schools.

Two of the six teachers who received the Milken Family Foundation's National Educator Awards in Ariz were charter school teachers.

The first class of graduates who had spent their entire high school career at a charter school graduated the spring of 1999. These graduates represented a diverse group. Some had been dropouts. Some are te parents. Some were looking for academic or artistic options not available at their district school. Whatev their reason for attending a charter school, all had the opportunity to choose a school that fit their particul needs.

Future charter school graduates will benefit from the new "Policy and Practice by Which Arizona's Public Universities Offer 'Regents' Waivers' to Academically Meritorious Arizona Students," which was drafted this spring by the Arizona Board of Regents. This new policy will require public state universities to grant tuition waivers to charter high sch graduates under the same criteria as traditional graduates.

The first annual Arizona charter school parent satisfaction survey was released this fall. The survey is conducted by the State Board for Charter Schools and is a legal requirement. More than 66 percent of the parents gave their child's school an A or with regard to overall quality of education.

Small School, Big Ideas

Carol Sammans spent two decades working in the public schools system, and the system educated her well. Sammans was intrigued by a presentation regarding Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. The Harvard professor contends that a person's level of intelligence . . . is actually made up of autonomous faculties that can work individually or in concert with other faculties. Gardner identifies these as musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences.

Sammans designed and implemented a "mini-society" with its own economy within her junior high classroom. It was a hit, not only with the kids, but also with other teachers. A school composed of small 'cottages' became Sammans' dream. She approached the district with her ideas, but was told it was just too expensive. Then the charter law was passed. Along with partner Ann Peschka, Sammans developed a curriculum that would feature Gardner's theory, her mini-society, and small classes.

Their charter was approved and EduPreneurship Student Center opened in the fall of 1995. Students are placed in one of four multi-age 'cottages' according to their academic achievement. Students spend about two years in each cottage. Material is presented in an active, hands-on environment, characterized by Sammans as a holistic approach. In order to move up, students must demonstrate mastery of skills that are aligned with state standards.

The entrepreneurial aspect of the school provides a unique teaching tool. The character of the EduPreneurship schools is greatly influenced by their small size. The two sites have combined population of about 160 and a total staff of thirteen. This lean approach allows ESC to pay salaries that are competitive with districts. It also permits the entire staff to sit down together on a regular basis to talk about what is working and what is not. This gives teachers a much more influential role than possible in a large district.

Degrees of Accomplishment

This spring, two Arizona high school seniors will graduate from college just days before receiving the high school diplomas. While it has become commonplace for high school students to take an occasional college course, this is a most unusual event. These Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center (AAEC) charter school students are living proof of the positive changes possible when innovation is encouraged, not stifled. The charter school is located on the campus of the South Mountain Community College (SMCC) and specializes in applied sciences, mathematics and agricultural subjects. The partnership between AAEC and SMCC has made possible not only an enhanced educational experience for the high school students, also represents an efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The accomplishments of these students were made possible through the concept of dual enrollment. In addition to getting an early start on their college education, AAEC pays the students SMCC tuition. The school allots 10 percent of its operating budget for tuition expenses, although actual costs are lower because not all students take college classes.

Just the Facts

Until now, much of the debate about charter schools has been based on anecdotal evidence, allegation and unsubstantiated claims. However, there are now a significant number of charter schools that have been operating for at least five years. This should provide an adequate data set for empirical research that will provide real answers for parents, policy makers and educators. In response to this need for research, the Goldwater Institute's Center for Market-Based Education and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation recently sponsored the Charter School Research Conference. The purpose of the event was to bring together a diverse group of researchers and scholars with different degrees of skepticism about the charter school movement to develop a research agenda for the future. The goal then is to use the knowledge gained in research to improve outcomes.

There are a number of factors that make charter school research difficult. Because there are significant differences in the state laws that govern charters, there is naturally a great difference in the schools themselves. In addition, the varying curricula and pedagogies make comparisons difficult. Some charters are much more like district schools than other charters. A recent study of teachers and school choice suggests that at least in the short term, school choice is good for both charter and district public school teachers. Parent satisfaction surveys as research were discussed. Many at the conference were interested in the authorizing/monitoring processes. More generally researchers would like to consider the

role of government relative to charter schools. While there is evidence that charter schools had a positive impact on district schools in Michigan, there are still many questions about the effect of charters on district schools. Special education is also an area that is ripe for research. Nationally, about 11 percent of all students are 'special ed.' In charters that figure is about 8 percent.

The proceedings of this conference will be published by the Goldwater Institute and will be available this summer. The results of the research will take longer but we believe will provide important information for everyone interested in improving public education.

The National Center for Alternative Education has recently been created in Indianapolis. It will concentrate exclusively on public alternative schools of the (Raywid) Type I category. Type I alternative schools and programs will be listed along with research data, publications, alternative national trainers, alternative assessment methods, and state laws covering alternative schools. Website: <http://www.natalted.org>.

On March 7 a National Forum was held by **Indiana's Alternative Education Conference** in Columbus. Participants learned about effective public alternative education practices and about trends in educational alternatives in the US. It was a follow-up to a documentary produced by Bill Moyers 10 years ago. Speakers included **Robert Barr, Steve Boncheck, Carl Boyd, Jerry Conrath, Tom Gregory, Arnie Langberg, Jay McGee, Joe Nathan, Bill Perrett, and Mary Anne Raywid**. A video of the Forum will be aired on PBS and is available from **Bill Barton**, Director of Alternative Education, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp., Columbus, IN 47201. Tel: (812) 376-4301.

When New York's Education Commissioner **Richard Mills** rejected allowing some of the most highly regarded alternative schools to substitute projects for standardized tests, it was seen as a warning signal for the future of alternative schools. According to the article, "More No. 2 Pencils at Alternative Schools" by Marjorie Coeyman, "As many states require students to pass standardized tests in order to graduate, the creative evaluation methods have put alternative schools at odds with state policymakers." The author also asked **Jerry Mintz** of **AERO** when alternative schools began in the United States. He said that in the 1920's and 30's, Montessori and Waldorf schools became popular, as well as the progressive school movement based on the work of John Dewey. WWII and the rise of teachers unions had a chilling effect on such experiments. The movement again gained momentum in the 1960's, in part because of the publication of *Summerhill*, by **AS. Neill**. This article was published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Feb. 8, 2000.

The **Iowa Association of Alternative Education** has started up an alternative education web ring. What a web ring does is link websites of similar content together; in this case, alternative education web sites. This allows people looking for alternative education resources an easier way to find them. They are just starting the ring, and have two sites, IAAE and EXCEL Alternative School. To join the ring and see it in action, visit www.iaae.net.

Jerry Mintz did a demonstration of democratic decision-making process with the School For The Physical City, a public alternative in New York City. There were forty students, and there is hope that the school may choose to become the first democratic school in the New York area. The teacher who invited him will become co-director next year:

"I was that teacher and I would like to thank Jerry publicly for the terrific demonstration. Eight proposals were voted on by the class during the two-hour time, 6 were sent to the administration and 4 were implemented by the next day. Two were scheduled for further discussion. It was a terrific event that should have longer-term ramifications. Thanks Jerry." Michael.

Alumni Stories

CORRECTION

On Page 7 of Education Revolution Issue #28 a mistake was made as to the authorship *Commentary on Summerhill Situation* by a Summerhill Graduate'. We mixed up our Gusses! The author was actually **Gus Griffin**, not **Gus Dudgeon**. Gus Griffin is not a former graduate of Summerhill, but rather of **Barker Free School** (Vancouver, Canada) - but he has since been officially adopted by **Summerhill** in December - so we almost got that part right.

From **hajime_noguchi@yahoo.com**: I was very unconfident at school and never was one to speak in front of a whole class, but school meetings helped me to speak out to the community and have my own opinion which many people, especially in Japan, do not have. Also I was not able to play any sports or to carry out any other activities due to being shy and skinny, but Summerhill has helped me a lot in that respect. In my final years, I was a member of a social committee and took part in school basketball, football, and volleyball teams! I spent 7 years at Summerhill and as I grew older, I became more experienced about how Summerhill was run and understood how I could improve it. This school is run by a community that is always trying to improve; this school is flexible and I believe Summerhill is now better than how I used to know. I'm now at University of Nottingham doing Maths and Physics as a scholarship student. I'm really having a good time here. I have no regrets about Summerhill and I can proudly say MY LIFE IS GREAT. I think no one school can suit everyone and one must also make an effort to fit in anywhere. I must remind everyone that it is not a perfect place like everywhere else, but it makes me feel at home when I go back to Summerhill.

International News and Communications

Albania/Belgium

On behalf of **Teachers Without Borders** - Belgium, I visited a school in Novosej, a small remote mountain village in the North East of Albania, near the border of Kosovo. The school has no electricity at all and no water. The teachers have no materials, no equipment, the classrooms are heated by small wood-burning stoves, which means that the children in the front are heated but the children in the back are freezing. There is new furniture donated by a relief organization, and on one side of the building the windows are renovated with money from the **Soros Foundation**. The books used by the English language teacher are completely out of date and falling apart. And yet there are friendly teachers who try to teach under such miserable circumstances. The government of Albania has no money to improve the situation because Albania is a completely ruined country.

It is not easy to boost the economy, and there is a lot of fraud and Mafia going on. Although the people in the village are poor, they gave me an extremely warm welcome. Of course, I was coming with a message of hope, because Teachers Without Borders - Belgium has committed itself to help the school by all means. **Teachers Without Borders** is a non-profit organization of volunteers in Flanders, Belgium, created in December 1997. They have collected school materials and English books for refugee centers in Flanders for two schools in Ukraine. During November, eight of the volunteers were in the Rogers Person Center School in Budapest to do some maintenance work. Next year they are planning a project to assist a school in Albania. Teachers Without Borders also exists in Wallonia, Belgium, in France, and in the French speaking part of Switzerland. They organize in-service trainings for teachers in Burkina and Senegal, Africa. **Paul Aerts**, Jachthoornlaan 76, B-2970 Schilde, Tel & Fax: +32 (0)3 658 44 57. E-mail: aerts@glo.be

AUSTRALIA

Congratulations to **Connect** on their 20th Anniversary! In the 120th issue is an article called "Student Led Conference: Student Participation in Assessment and Reporting." In 1999, the Point Clare Public School decided to implement a new approach to reporting to parents. "The children conducted student-led

conferences as part of the traditional parent/teacher interviews... The conferences provided an opportunity for parents to accept their child's evaluation of his or her accomplishments and to provide them with support and encouragement for his or work at school." Both students and parents responded very positively to the conferences, and the school plans to continue this form of reporting. Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070, Victoria, Australia.

BELGIUM

De Weide School in Belgium was founded in 1973, based on the ideas of **A.S. Neill** and others. The school is run democratically by parents and teachers; the rules are made by the children and teachers. Lessons are not compulsory. A small-scale school, it is partly state-funded and parents pay a small fee. Email: degroteweide@belgacom.net. De Weide, St. Appoloniastraat, 11 9420 Erpe Mere, Belgium.

CANADA

There needs to be international organizing against the Western Global - Economics driven control of education in the same manner that there is organizing against WTO, IMF. The curricula, the assessments, the surveillance, the Audit culture gone mad is the same in Illinois, Ontario and the County of Suffolk ... just check out a handful of web sites of education ministries in North America and Western Europe. They look like they were written by one computer.

Governments are no longer producing fodder for trench warfare like they were when the present system was established, but they are producing Economic Warriors to fight in the GNP Wars and be happy with a fuzzy addiction to consuming and owning the unnecessary.

THEY know that if they can control education they can go a long way to controlling the people, and can keep democracy on a leash.

How come the last few generation of activists don't seem to know this??

How come the activist organizations don't make a connection between 75 years of education control and the present ills that they spend so much energy fighting?

It's time the marches and the activism and that level of organization started to strike at one of the roots of what's wrong, in addition to moving against what has grown malignant above the ground. --Leonard Turton, Ontario.

COSTA RICA

From DERVISHAS@aol.com: Hello Jerry, First of all allow me to share how supportive it feels to visit your website. It feels good to know that there are sources and support for doing things differently. I am a member of a new commune in Costa Rica, which started last September. The number of people is growing fast and more are about to come. The need for creating a school came up recently and we are all very excited about it. We are planning to open the school in November 2000 and the outline of the program should be ready by March. Our school will be international and the language will be English. The members of our growing family are coming from 22 different countries, so besides learning English every child should learn also Spanish and his mother tongue. It is important for us to have a program that will fit with other international/alternative schools so that the children will always be able to join other schools around the world. We are totally new in that area and we have very little knowledge of how to do it, but we have lots of excitement to learn and to experiment in this journey. We would appreciate any help! **Sambodhi Argov**. Web: tyohar.org.il.

ECUADOR

We are **Roberto and Carmen Garcés**, parents of two, a girl (6) and a boy (3), from Quito, Ecuador. We have been interested in alternative ways of education since our first one entered nursery, when we decided to go to a Waldorf school, which had several problems that made us think that our dream of better education is just that, a dream. In our city we have noticed a tremendous lack of good, organized, well-assisted

alternative schools. Most of them don't offer continuous education until the last grade of high school, and those that do this are very expensive. For this reason we have been pushed to adopt a traditional school, even though we are convinced that an alternative way is the best for our children. Education in our country doesn't improve creativity; it's authoritative, too rigid, retentive, and has created non-self-confident humans. Homeschooling is not recognized by the Ministry of Education, so it is illegal. Are there any organizations that bring technical support to alternative schools in any kind of pedagogy and how we can contact them? If you can help, email gugarces@ecnet.ec.

ENGLAND

from Derry Hannam

Photo: Use AERO#28 tif 14, Just the head of the man in the center

Caption: Derry Hannam

I was just into the third paragraph of **Chris Mercogliano's** thought (and tear) provoking piece *The Teachings of Tragedy*, about Columbine High in *AERO #27* when I got your posting recommending *Making It Up As We Go Along* by Chris. Not long ago I would have said such an in-school shooting could not happen in the UK even though our schools have their share of hurt, alienated and un-heard students, especially in large secondary schools. Now I'm not so confident. I have just read this poem by a ten-year in Liverpool:

Someone was shot
In the betting shop
Black car, black windows
No one knows what happened
Cries for help.
A man is dead in an ambulance bed

GUNS AND KNIVES -
EVERYONE DIES
NO GUNS, NO KNIVES -
NOBODY DIES
NO GUNS, NO KNIVES -
EVERYONE'S ALIVE.

MURDER, MURDER
PEOPLE CRY,
MURDER IN LIVERPOOL,
I WONDER WHY?

At the same time some kids in Manchester told me recently of cases where older boys have taken guns to school. One of these kids comes from a primary school in one of the poorest areas in the UK, yet it is a so democratic school, very appreciated by parents. In fact, I have a video of the kids from the student council saying how the democracy in the school has changed their view of themselves and their future and how it has put a stop to bullying and violence in the school. Sadly when some of them move on to the secondary schools they find a very different environment. It is in a secondary school such as this that we will have our first Columbine High I fear, as so far it is only in such areas that older kids have access to firearms. Our Education Ministry Working Party on Citizenship has been instructed to produce guidelines on how secondary schools can develop 'participation and action skills', which will become a legal requirement in 2002. By the way - have I ever told you what a great journal the *Education Revolution* is? (Especially now I've discovered a picture of me in Aero#28!!) **Derry Hannam**

The first *Alternatives in Education Fair* by **Human Scale Education** took place in London on September 25, 1999. It was tremendously successful, attended by more than 600 people, mostly parents. Home education was represented by three organizations, reflecting the rapid growth in England in this area. Jan Lowe covered many of the practical, social, and legal aspects of homeschooling. One of the participants said that her school was allowing her child a flexi-schooling arrangement, so that he could attend school about half the week. HSE is planning a bigger Alternative in Education Fair for this year. From *News: Schools Tomorrow*, HSE, 95 Carlingcott, Near Bath, BA2 8AW. Tel/fax: 01275 332516.

From *Living Lightly with Positive News*, Issue 10: **The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts** offers comprehensive degree-level courses for those wishing to work in the entertainment industry. The idea for the Institute grew out of the desire by Paul McCartney to save his old school building from destruction, coupled with the need for giving students insights into the complexities of the performing arts field. The Institute offers some unique degree qualifications, helping artists work together cooperatively, thus enabling them to fulfill their potential. In the same issue, an article by Carolyn Chalton called "Education in the Outback" describes a woman named **Bronwyn Rayner** who owns and directs the **Taggerty Pioneer Education Center Inc** (TPEC). It was established in 1978 as a hands-on outdoor educational facility. Bronwyn believes that "Given an appropriate environment, every individual can achieve the limit of his or her potential." The program encourages team building skills and cooperation. Activities include pioneer-style cooking, wattle and daub building, blacksmithing, and damper making. "Over the years, many disadvantaged young people have been given the opportunity to discover their potential in a supportive learning environment that enables them to learn the skills that will enable them to rejoin mainstream society." Living Lightly, 10-12 Picton St., Bristol BS6 5QA.

FRANCE

From Sue F., sue@ELIJAH.CHARIS.CO.UK: A family in France is considering moving because new laws have clamped down on homeschooling, and they suspect that it will soon be illegal altogether. With permission, this is part of their message: "I am a teacher and I've seen and heard enough to make me realize that our son will get nothing better than over-crowded and noisy classrooms, inefficient teaching and learning, over-weighted satchels and homework, long days spent wasting a child's childhood on passively sitting and listening to devalued teachings and incoherent programs, negative peer-pressure and lowering morality, and, overall, a deep feeling of growing non-education. Last year's homeschooling law changed everything for the worse. This is how it basically stands: Home education must be for ill or handicapped children, or other particular situations; parents must inform local authorities of decision to homeschool or incur a penalty. A local authority will come into the home every two years to verify the parents' reasons for not school educating. If the local authority does not visit the homeschooling family, the inspector issues an immediate order for direct control by the Ministry of Interior's local office, which will control the child at least once a year, to check, among other things, if the child's progress is according to the standard program. The authority is not compelled to warn parents about the control. He has the full right of being assisted by any professional during the control, with or without the presence of the parents. He can conduct any exercise on the child, he can make him play with other children to test his socialization, and he can make him go through a psychological examination. If any negative remark from the inspector is not corrected within one month, parents are summoned to register their child to a public school. Private schools, otherwise legal, are excluded. Non-compliance leads to a monetary penalty and 6 months imprisonment. The law explicitly says that the child is *not* to be evaluated *only* according to academic standards. In fact, whatever these may be, the decisive element is human/child rights. This seems to me an amazing and catastrophic disguise: school has overtly become a Human Rights training place; its goal is to prevent children from being educated into "thinking", rather to indoctrinate them into "consumerism" citizenship. The local officials are *not* to be positive in their compulsory evaluations, and must avoid giving any opportunity for the parents to claim any officially recognized positive educational result. Now, the legislator has decreed for *any* homeschooling parents: our choices are wrong, we are being suspect of ill-treating our child whereas the State is his legitimate protector, and we *will* fail in our adventurous attempts. Thus says the law."

GERMANY

From **Martin Wilke**, martin.wilke@gmx.net: **Three** parents and I are going to try to start a non-coercive school in Berlin. In our first informal meeting we found that we have quite different ideas of how decisions should be made in a non-coercive school. While I think the majority should decide, they insist on consensus. Their main argument is that the majority would oppress the minority, that discussions would be ended as soon as it is clear that a motion will get a majority, and thus the minority would simply be ignored. What experience do you have in School Meetings or Assemblies with this point?

HUNGARY

Rogers Person-Centered School in Hungary is located in a blind alley in a quiet neighborhood. It is an alternative elementary through middle school. The school shares the building with an international private school and a small state school. The state school will be moving out of the building soon. Next September two other classes are also going to leave. For more, email Istvan /Rogers School at: aumpista@dpg.hu

JAPAN

KnoK NEWS of March published answers to questions about homeschooling in Japan by Tomiko Kugai in English. Ms. Kugai has been homeschooling her 14-year old daughter for over six years and heads a support group, Homeschooling Network-Himeji. She defines homeschooling as "shared upbringing in which the home, libraries, museums, parks ... are used as learning resources for children with the support of grownups." Homeschooling's most favorable point, she says, is that "first and foremost, the child plays the leading role." She explains that homeschooling is legal in Japan, but, since no systematic procedures are in place to deal with homeschooling, parents have difficulties. "It becomes necessary, then, to stand up for the right 'not to go to school' -- and for society to recognize that right. Citizens groups in Japan are already undertaking these very types of activities, and homeschooling support groups are springing up in many areas. The numbers of households that are choosing homeschooling due to school not suiting their children are slowly increasing." Homeschooling in Japan Home Page: <http://www2.gol.com/users/milkat/index.html>.

JAVA

From **Ninil**: There are many kinds of forms and concepts of alternative education in Indonesia. We intend to establish an alternative education school or institution on East Java, specifically in Surabaya. But this plan is on hold at the present time for lack of funding. So, for the time being, our organization produces and carries out many programs of non-school activities, usually in the form of courses: school teacher course/training, village schoolteacher course, preacher course/training, facilitator training, and so on. The course/training was given to give teachers insight about alternative matters.

LATVIA

I am very interested in alternative education; my colleagues from Latvia are trying to set up a **Latvian Academy of Creativity**. We have several experimental places where we develop special training for preschool and elementary school students of universities in Russia, Belarus, Latvia, and Ukraine. I will work in Europe as a university professor and consultant. **Nikolai Khomenko**, Insight Technologies Lab, Fax: 1-413-473-7459. E-mail: jl-project@usa.net. <http://www.trizminsk.org/lab>.

NEPAL

From **Cynthia Edwards**: I thought for sure this would be my last year in Nepal, time for me to focus on creating a home in the US, pursue my new career as an organic farm inspector. But suddenly I find myself over my head working on setting up organic certification in Nepal, supporting the women in the JPP work area to set up a women's health center, and helping my friends at the **Women's Foundation** start an organic farm here in Kathmandu and developing agroforestry in several of their rural work areas.

The Women's Foundation was started 12 years ago by a group of college students. They have worked at the grassroots, national, and international levels of women's and human rights activism. Their activities a

programs include: Human Rights Protection and Awareness Workshops, election observation, Identifying abuse of authority by the State -- especially monitoring and helping protect women who end up in prison, and gender issues education and awareness raising.

Five years ago, they started a residential Women's Shelter in Kathmandu for women and children survivors of violence -- providing a safe haven, counseling, medical care, legal advocacy, and skills training. Their main skills training is in the production of a beautiful traditional cloth called Dhaka, which some of you have bought from me in the past few years. The profits from this have been helping to run the shelter.

Currently WF is facing a financial crisis which may force them to close the shelter. This would be a terrible loss. Plans to make the shelter economically self-sufficient are being developed but it will take so much time: 1. Dhaka Cloth -- Intensive marketing of the high-quality traditional cloth made in the skills training program and a local shop and export business is being set up, with a basic clothing line being developed. Creation of an organic farm to feed the shelter as well as provide high value produce to sell.

For more information on how you can help, contact The Ethnic Arts Foundation, 1112 Grant St., Madison, WI 53711. Email Cynthia at: jpp@mos.com.np

NEW ZEALAND

Richard Meinhard wrote: I think the only charter strategy that would really work would be one in which each school prepares and submits a charter proposal to their own elected board of governors and get their approval; then we would get rid of all bureaucracy and fund the schools directly. No districts, no district boundaries, all schools of choice. Next we would take the money saved and pump it into lower class sizes, technology, and building renovation. That would be the hook to get the union support, which hates the bureaucracy anyway. Then we would offer a voucher to any parent who didn't like any public charter school. Would it work? We'll see because that is exactly what New Zealand did. One of the effects was to reverse the 65% to 35% ratio of non-teaching to teaching to almost 35% to 65%. Another was the surplus of money that suddenly was available to buy off the union with smaller class sizes, technology, and better school buildings. Public schools in New Zealand were way behind the performance of private schools before chartering. After chartering, achievement in the public charter schools went up until the charter schools started to look no differently than private schools. What they have is a deregulated system of private and non-profit independent schools. Private schools who take vouchers have not been regulated. New Zealand was a basket case and need drove the reforms in many sectors. So if things get bad enough and if the citizens can see over the Berlin Wall to a better life, the wall will fall. Everyone thought the Soviet Union was strong in 1979. Everyone thinks public schooling is strong in 1999. But the momentum is building, and I don't think charter schools will defuse it. I think they are fueling it as people see how the system co-opts even these. Submitted by **Ann Lahrson Fisher**.

We moved from Washington State to New Zealand this past year. Still unschooling. Have found many kindred spirits here. Not so many alternative schools, other than church schools, but all kinds of homeschoolers. We do have to do a fair amount of write-up regarding our family's plan for homeschooling in order to be granted an exemption from schooling from the Ministry of Education. Once granted, though families are entitled to a generous stipend to help with homeschooling expenses. Some schools here are so very British in nature. Most all require uniforms. My kids were horrified. Going to school was tempting at first (a quick way to meet new kids), but the many cons far outweighed the pros. And they are such unschoolers to the core, they didn't want to give up their freedom. So we went searching for the other unschoolers, and we found them! Having been out of the loop for so long, it will be good to be getting your publication again and to see what's happening in alternative education these days. Cheers, **Susan McMin Seefeldt**.

We've got an organization here called **International Exchange Programs (IEP)** that runs a program called Overseas Practical Training USA (OPT-USA), among others. For this program, it is up to the applicant to find a placement for themselves in a field related to their course of study or occupation for 3-18 months. I did a course called the **Landmark Forum** and it made the most profound difference in my life. It's about looking outside the limits you have unconsciously set for yourself, and being able to see another point of view of life and the issues you deal with daily. Landmark runs programs called the Landmark Forum for

Young People and the Landmark Forum for Teens and they are what I work on in a volunteer capacity. It provides our young people with such a sense of being a contributing member of their family, school, and community and allows them the freedom to be leaders. I train and develop the people in the Auckland Landmark Education center to do all the preparation for the courses and I also supervise them. I want to come to the USA, to further my training with the Landmark Forum for Teens and Young People. **Stepha Blackstock**, 69 Almorah Rd., Epsom, Auckland, New Zealand. s_blackstock@hotmail.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

I am a Final year **Community Youth Work** student In Belfast, Northern Ireland. I also work as the youth group support and development worker for the Children's Law Center in Belfast, a children's rights organization based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are a relatively new organization and I am currently supporting the development of the youth group, with a view of facilitating full youth participation throughout the whole organization. Along with my interest in youth rights, I am very interested in alternative education. Unfortunately here in NI we have very few alternatives to mainstream education. The only alternative education projects that I am aware of are those that provide education for young people who are early school leavers, those at risk of entering the criminal justice system, and for those expelled or suspended from school.

I am currently working on my dissertation for my degree and I aim to focus on one of these projects that reported to be successful and appears to have a very innovative approach which works for the young people. Based on my findings I hope to conclude with a recommended model of good practice, a way of working model that could be applied in all formal education settings. Any recommendations or suggestions would be appreciated. **Tricia Magee**. Email: patricia@thegirls.freeserve.co.uk

NORWAY

The Norwegian Reform 94 program requires upper secondary schools to become quite student participative - in lesson planning and evaluation as well as generally running the school. While visiting there, I met academic researchers, administrators and teachers and was invited to give a talk on democratic schooling worldwide to the National Conference of Upper Secondary School Students. They were a fantastic bunch of young people - the student council chairpersons and secretaries from about 65 schools all over Norway. I was at a similar but international conference organized by the Danish school students union GLO (one of two - the other is called DGS - they are currently trying to amalgamate) a couple of weeks before this. The Nordic countries are way ahead of the rest of Europe in seriously attempting to make school experience more participative and democratic for students.

On my last day in Norway I managed to visit the only democratic state funded school in the world to have been started by students (I think!). It is called the Forsoksgymnaset or FGO; their website is www.skoleetaten.oslo.No/skole/forsoksgym. From Derry Hannam.

PALISTINE, WEST BANK, ISRAEL

Our condolences to everyone at the **Hope Flowers School** on the sudden loss of their Director, **Hussein Ibrahim Issa**. Hussein's will was to continue his message of peace and to deliver it to all Palestine people and to achieve his ambition to build a new generation that believes in peace and respects the rights of the others. Hind, Hussein's wife, will take over as Director. Several new plans are underway to raise the standard of education facilities available to the children. These include a playground and special rooms to be named "Hussein's Dialogue Halls", providing facilities to bring people from different nations together to talk with each other and break down fear barriers. The school also plans to participate in the Tokyo Shure 2000 Conference. If anyone is interested in supporting Hope Flowers School's ongoing projects, please contact Hind Issa at amalzh@hally.net. If you feel that you are able to contribute, please send a donation to the school bank account at the following address: The Hope Flowers Secondary School. Mercantile Discount Bank, Bethlehem Branch, Account #: 118451. Please inform us if you send any donations for the school by e mail or by fax : 0097222747084. (Note: *AERO has sent a \$4000 donation from the **Edwards Foundation** in **Hussein Issa's** memory to help the school and support two people to attend the IDEC).*

RUSSIA

Andrew Pantuew, teacher of logic at **Kluch School** reports that they have organized a traditional study program for homeschoolers. He says that ten years ago, homeschooling was illegal (to the point where children would be sent to orphanages), but now parents have the right to teach at home. The program unites parents and teachers for social adaptation and sharing of knowledge. With help from the Edwards Foundation, Kluch has found quarters for their school having to leave their previous location because of 1 and other problems.

PHOTO #9 Students from Kluch School, in Russia

TURKEY

I am a medical student studying in Turkey. In my city, Diyarbaki, we try to develop a good and true understanding of efforts to establish peace and democracy in our medicine curriculum. Unfortunately, I only became aware of your work in the last few days, and I decided to subscribe to the mailserv. It seems that the people here work very hard to achieve these very important aims. In my opinion, I believe that Democracy and peace among our societies is the first and most crucial step in eliminating Human Rights abuses for ethnic minorities, lower socio-economic classes, and all oppressed people in the world. I personally give great importance to such efforts and try to inform my friends and encourage them to participate in any campaign in my hometown. Can you please show me how to get relevant information concerning this issue? Thanks a lot for your kind interest. M. Aly Cetyner, Dicle University Medical Faculty 5. Class Diyarbaki Turkey. Email: m.ali@medmail.com.

UKRAINE

Stork Family School News: Our school keeps struggling but we believe that times might get better as we now have a new minister of education. He seems to be really progressive and concerned about children's rights. He is showing great interest in alternative education and we expect to have his support. We believe that he will try to legalize the right of schools and parents to have their own ways in education. The first thing he did was to cancel compulsory exams except for the finals. Stork School took part in The National Exhibition of Contemporary Education in Ukraine 2000 held in Kiev and we were granted a diploma. In spite of the difficulties, I believe our kids are happy as ever and we hope to keep it up. Looking forward to meeting you in Japan. Oleg.

Teachers, Jobs and Internships

Crest Learning Center is seeking a full-time teacher-facilitator for an alternative high school in Mercer Island, WA. Requirements include Washington State Certification, experience in curriculum development and alternative methods of education in multiple subject areas, among others. For more information, contact Jason Porter at (206) 329-1362. Email: Jason_Porter@misd.wednet.edu

The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is a K-12 institution entering its fifth year with 145 students. It is located in West Tisbury. The school has full time teacher openings for a Secondary Math Teacher -- Grades 7-12, and a Secondary Science Teacher-- Grades 7-12. Requirements for both positions include MA Curriculum Frameworks understanding; experience in a multi-age, project based setting; ability to diversify teaching/assessment strategies and to teach in student centered classrooms; and curriculum development experience. Please send cover letter, resume, and three references to: **Robert Moore**, Director MVPCS, P.O. Box 1150, West Tisbury, MA 02575.

Cedarwood Sudbury School is a small (25 student) school in Santa Clara, CA, modeled on Sudbury Valley School. Cedarwood currently has staff openings. Prospective candidates should read at least one book about Sudbury School. Staff members are elected to work for one year; there is no tenure. The staff election for

the next school year will be held in June. Before then, anyone who wishes to run should visit the school enough for students and staff to know them. Typically new staff members are elected to work part-time, working two or three days per week. It is only after people are sure about the new person's usefulness and commitment that the school elects him or her to a full-time position. Please contact **Stuart Williams-Ley** Freekids@aol.com, or call (408) 296-2072.

Unity Charter School is looking for an academic leader/director for its K-8 ecocentrically focused independent public school. The position is open as of January 2000. The school needs a professional educator who would be interested in a leadership role in the continued design and implementation of an experiential child-centered, ecocentric learning curriculum and environment, holds a supervisory certificate from the New Jersey Department of Education, be willing to observe and formally critique fellow staff members, be able to write administrative reports for the Department of Education, be willing to work in a democratic school community, and be willing to implement an Adlerian approach to. Contact Unity Charter School c/o Peter Kadar, 40 Franklin Street, Morristown, NJ 07960 Tel: (973) 984-2800 Fax: (973) 984-7693 Email: unity@gti.net

Always wanted to teach, but not in a traditional setting? Free public progressive charter school needs teachers for new campuses. K-8 extending one grade per year through 12th. \$20-23K, great benefits, southern lower cost of living. Ranch science and marine science campuses in central Florida. Send resume and personal statement of educational philosophy in your choice of formats. Minimum of bachelor's degree, prefer additional languages & international experience. Must love children and to organize chaos, be a team member. Especially needed are Science, math, music/fine arts. Mixed-age grouping, teacher as mentor, authentic assessment, non-coercive, process goals, student-paced education, project oriented learning. **Renaissance School**, Lake Worth, FL Fax (863) 701-1044 or email trs1@digital.net

A CHILD'S PLACE SCHOOL in Lincroft, N.J. near Red Bank is seeking an Intern for a 1 classroom in an innovative small private pre-school with individualized learning and integrating progressive traditions with new methods and the philosophies of **Reggio Emilia** and the **Project Approach**. Start Sept. 2000 - school year ends June 16, 2001. Must have BA degree and training in Early Childhood and the Arts. Intern salary - \$19-\$21K and First year teachers salary - \$23-\$25K for 9 month school term. Please send cover letter and resume to: A Child's Place School, 1409 W. Front St., Lincroft, N.J. 07738. Any questions regarding the above, please call me at 732-747-0141. **Mary Murphy**, alba@nac.net

Play Mountain Place, one of the oldest humanistic alternative schools in the U.S., is hiring nursery and elementary teachers, as well as looking for interns to train with them. PMP emphasizes deep respect for children, support for their social and emotional growth, child initiated curriculums and team-teaching using a consensus approach to decision making. Preference will be given to teachers already trained in this philosophy. Interns are individuals interested in receiving intensive, hands-on experience, fulfilling a practicum or working toward a teaching position. Scholarships and sometimes housing are available. Call or fax Judy Acardi at (323) 870-4381. Or write PMP at 6063 Hargus St., Los Angeles, CA 90034.

A new school that will nurture a variety of learning styles, honor imagination, and encourage divergent thinking is being planned. The **DaVinci School** will be located in the Westfield/Summit area of central New Jersey and will make use of research on right and left brain thinking. The teaching will endeavor to aid the students in using and

developing the powers of both sides of their brains. There will be 5-8 students per teacher, depending on age. Larger groups will come together for discussions and presentations. We are looking for a teacher who has high intelligence, a good sense of humor and a very open mind. Experience in or credentials for teaching grades K-6 is required. Experience in teaching children with learning disabilities or familiarity with research on right and left brain thinking and multiple intelligences would be a plus. If you would like further information, please contact Grayson Alexander at galex@ivillage.com.

An assistant professor of alternative education is being sought for the Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies Department of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Education. This position involves teaching graduate and undergraduate students in the Community Ed. undergrad program, Master's program in Cultural Foundations, and Foundations courses in the Teacher Certification program. Contact Ian Harris, Dept. of Ed. Policy and Community Studies, University of WI-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413. Tel: (414) 229-4724.

DELTA Community Charter School is a new developmentally based charter school opening in New Jersey in August. Teachers are being sought with either an elementary education certificate, or middle school certification with an academic concentration in either math/science, or social studies/language arts. Contact Marilyn Bellis at 10 Hanover Court, Jacobstown, NJ 08562. Email: ebellis@gbsias.com

Sojourner School, a Boulder Valley School District Charter School is looking for a school director for 2000-1. It has 70 6th and 7th grade students, 108 6th-8th grade by 2002. It has an experiential curriculum, is interdisciplinary, multi-cultural, and has extended field experiences. Salary is minimum \$42,000. Experience with Conflict Resolution, Experiential and Multi-cultural Education, Middle School Students School-Level Administration, familiarity with Spanish. Contact ArleenMco@aol.com, 2650 Table Mesa Boulder, CO. 80303 303/494-9210 www.bvbsd.k12.co.us/schools/sojourner

The **Sonoma County Charter School** seeks to fill the positions of Administrator /Teacher and two Elementary Teachers. The Sonoma County Charter School is a non-graded, thematic, creative, project-based school that is committed to parent involvement, environmental education and a strong academic foundation. Contact: Janis Kois, Office Manager, 1060 Corona Road, Petaluma, CA 94952. Tel: (707) 778-5060. Fax: (707) 778-5061.

Unique opportunity! Newly expanding small, progressive, nonprofit elementary school is seeking a teacher for grades 3-5 in a mixed-age classroom. Participate in classroom design and materials selection. The first year is a paid apprenticeship: work with master teacher and receive training in social and content areas. Ideal applicant will be excited about working in a strong anti-bias program with integrated curriculum, manipulative-based math, and inclusive history/social studies. Send resumé, philosophy of teaching, and reasons for your interest in our school to: **Trisha Whitney, Drinking Gourd Elementary School**, 2809 Shirley St., Eugene, OR 97404. For more information call 541/689-5255 or trishadg@aol.com

I am writing to you as a member of the search committee for a 7th/8th-grade teacher **Skyview School**, a charter school located in Prescott, AZ. We are looking for a certified, creative and dynamic teacher who has knowledge and belief in multiple intelligences theory, project-based, integrated learning, and authentic assessments and willingness and ability to teach in multiple subject areas. Please send resume with cover

letter to Skyview School, 124 South Rush Street, Prescott, AZ 86303 or electronically to jewel100@frontiernet.net Phone: 520/717-6018 Fax: 520/717-6019

Liberty Valley School, located approximately 45 minutes Southwest of Chicago, Illinois, a small, innovative, private, Sudbury School with students ages 4 - 19 seeks applicants for 3 - 5 day position. Responsibilities include administration & student contact. Qualifications: dynamic, intelligent, hard working, responsible, tolerant, open-minded applicants with good communication skills capable of excelling in a non-hierarchical environment. Send a resume and a statement as to why you believe you have the above qualifications to: **Michelle Patkze**, jjmp@starnetinc.com or call LVS at 815-730-0030.

Little River Community School is seeking an intern teacher for the 2000/2001 school year. Little River is an alternative community school with 10-15 students, ages 5-14. They will train a new teacher in this unique one room schoolhouse setting by pairing an intern with an experienced teacher. The intern will handle full teaching responsibilities in exchange for training, room, board and a stipend. The school is located on Birdsfoot Farm, an intentional community with five adults and three children on 73 acres. Birdsfoot is a certified organic vegetable farm and we live together cooperatively, sharing meals. The intern will be selected in the spring by students, parents and teacher. For more information about the internship, school and community, write to **Steve Molnar**, 1227 CR 25, Canton, NY 13617. Tel: (315) 379-9474. Email: molteng@northnet.org

Community of Learners Charter School, a part of the Durango District 9R public school system, is a "school of choice" where each student, parent, and teacher makes the decision to be involved in the school. Now in its sixth year of operation, COL offers an academically challenging, experiential and interdisciplinary program in which service-learning, outdoor, and social education are woven into the core curriculum. Teachers respect students' unique needs, goals, and personalities and utilize creative methods to accommodate individual learning styles. The school is seeking to fill three positions: Middle/High School Teacher/Advisor; Middle/High School Teacher in Special Education; and Middle/High School Special Education Teacher Skills Lab Coordinator. Please call or come by to request an application. Send complete COL application, resume, cover letter, letters of reference, official transcripts and certifications, and any other relevant information directly to COL, 201 East 12th Street, Durango, CO 81301. Tel: (970) 259-0316 Fax: (970) 259-1216.

TEACHERS LOOKING FOR JOBS

Hello, my name is **Meredith Crandall**. I am in my first semester working toward a masters in education with **Goddard College**. Currently I am living in Vermont, but am interested in student teaching in another country next year. I am interested in democratic schools and the outdoors, and I am open to new ideas. I am not yet fluent in Spanish, so an English-speaking situation might be best. I am hard working, creative and very energetic. Most importantly, I love children. You can reach me at meredithlynn@hotmail.com.

Jennifer Oman is currently teaching first grade on the Hopi Indian Reservation in Arizona and has taught seventh grade there. She has experience teaching art in Brooklyn, New York. Her personal philosophy is to treat students with respect and kindness and she would like to work in an environment where this is accepted and encouraged. She would like to teach art combined with other subjects (an interdisciplinary approach), and would also like to offer support to teachers within the school to incorporate art into their curriculum, and collaborate with them on projects. She would also like to serve as a community art liaison involving the community in the school through art. This description may be three separate jobs, or it may be possible to carry out two or more of them through one position. She is willing to relocate to Seattle, WA, Oregon, California, or to remain in Arizona. Contact Jennifer at: P.O. Box 551, Second Mesa, AZ 86043 Tel: (520) 737-2531. Email: jenniferoman@hotmail.com

Barbara Shpack is searching for an alternative school in which to teach and to educate her own children. She has two degrees in music, and has taught for twenty years in this field, as well as a teaching certificate in elementary education. She is willing to relocate. Contact her at shpack12@hotmail.com or phone (540) 727-8776.

Brian Morse, popexplosion@hotmail.com: I am in my first year teaching social studies and language arts at the sixth grade level in Longmont, CO. My previous experience includes being Education Program Coordinator at the Catharine Street Community Center in Poughkeepsie, NY where I directed adult parenting programs and an urban youth HIV/AIDS peer education program. I am actively locating employment and learning opportunities working with low-income youth and / or youth of color either in an alternative school or non-profit org. educational setting. Willing to relocate. 1361 Humboldt St. #5 Denver, CO 80218 Tel: (303) 813-1231

Joy R. Kliever, Ph.D, author of the book, **The Innovative Campus: Nurturing the Distinctive Learning Environment**, is seeking to continue her career at an innovative college or university. Her educational and professional background is in the field of Higher Education with an emphasis on institutional reform. An administrative position in academic affairs that incorporates teaching would be highly desirable, beginning in July. She has an extensive background in educational and institutional research, campus/community outreach, and teaching, and has led presentations across the country on the topic of innovative colleges at universities, alternative education, and faculty development. Email: joyk@westernu.edu. Tel: (909) 469-5302. Fax: (909) 469-5235.

Brian Rooney is a part-time Social Studies teacher in an alternative education program in a public high school. Also has experience teaching students age 13-19 with severe behavioral disorders. PA certified, willing to relocate for full-time position. Any openings, please contact at brianrooney@yahoo.com.

Kristine Keppel is a high school teacher who would like to teach in an alternative school. She has been licensed for 10 years in dance, theater, and English in the public schools. She would be interested to relocate. Tel: (702) 365-7627.

I am looking for a job as a Director or Principal of an alternative school. I taught for 7 years in an alternative high school for at-risk high schoolers. I worked as a teacher/coordinator for an urban school district and started a school for at-risk, disaffected high school students from that city. I founded a county wide alternative high school and served as principal for three years. Most recently I worked as Assistant Principal of a large comprehensive, academically oriented high school. I am ready to return to alternative education in September. I hold a BA in Classics and three masters' degrees. I am certified in NJ as a teacher of social studies, supervisor, and principal and hold certificates of eligibility for superintendent and school business administrator. I can be contacted by leaving a message at (609) 404-0010; or write to **Loren Thomas**, 873 East Motts Creek Road, Absecon, NJ 08201.

I am an alternative school principal in western Canada and along with alternative education, another of my interests is international education and teaching abroad, particularly in Australia. I am looking to further my career in an alternative school outside of Canada. I may also be interested in any unique opportunities in the US. If anyone can be of any assistance I would certainly appreciate it. **Trevor Sturgeon**, tsturgeon@wolfcreek.ab.ca
Tel: (403) 314-0095 or (403) 782-7438.

Elisabeth writes: I have experience teaching special needs students in a public school and residential school setting. I taught briefly in a Medium Security Correctional Facility. Now I am ready to go where my heart has been for years...alternative education. I'm dedicated, committed, and enthusiastic, looking out for wh

is in the student's best interest. I am a lifelong learner, love teaching, and receive so many blessings from students. Email: mauldin@coollink.net

I am seeking a teaching position at a non-residential high school in or around Boston for the '00-'01 school year. I have one year of full-time teaching experience at an alternative high school. My background is in earth science, environmental studies, and social studies. I'm open to considering alternative or traditional schools, private or public. Please contact **Dan Rosenberg** at daniel_s_r@hotmail.com (if possible) or leave a phone message at 973-539-3283.

Conferences

June 26 – 28, **International Education Summit for A Democratic Society**, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. This conference will gather progressive nationally known educators with teachers, parents, and community members locally and throughout the country to explore issues such as: literacy and language; media for understanding and social justice; inclusion as a sweeping concept related to fairness, equality, and democracy; social studies as a critique of tyranny and call for civic engagement; and authentic learning strategies as a tool for connecting students to communities and communities to students, among many others. For registration information, email Hal Dittenber at hditten@coe.wayne.edu. Web: <http://www.coe.wayne.edu/CommunityBuilding/WSC.html>

June 26 - 30, **Institute for People's Education and Action, Woolman Hill Conference Center**, Deerfield, MA. 3rd annual institute to learn and share experiences with people's education: popular, folk, and community based learning for building just and sustainable communities. IPEA gathers a dynamic and experienced group of leaders and learners from community-based organizations, universities, labor centers, and other organizations around the continent. Courses will include Visual Literacy, Popular Education and the Arts, Collaborative Community Research and Evaluation among others. For more information, contact: **Chris Spicer**, Director, 107 Vernon St., Northampton, MA 01060. Tel: 415-855-8755. Email: cspicer@k12s.phast.umass.edu. Website: www.peopleseducation.org

July 7-8, the **New England Homeschool & Family Learning Conference** will be held at the Boxborough Holiday Inn, Boxborough, MA. You will find complete vendor registration info at the HomeEducator.com conference page. Scroll to the bottom of the page and you may then download the information and registration form.

July 13-16, Breaking Barriers, Working Together for Justice in Schools, **National Coalition of Educational Activists**, University of CA, LA, 330 DeNeve Dr, La, CA 90095-1494; Fax 310 206 7122. Conferences@ha.ucla.edu

August 26, **Education Otherwise**, York, North Yorkshire, Great Britain. Support, advice and inspiration for those considering or already doing home education. For further information send SAE to 22, Rugby Road, Newport, Gwent NP19 0BS or visit www.education-otherwise.org

June 22-24, Bloomington, MN, **30th Annual International Alternative Education Conference, A Revolution in Alternative Education, New Schools for a New Age**, Thunderbird Hotel and Convention Center Bloomington, MN (Located adjacent to The MALL of AMERICA - the nation's largest shopping center)

largest mall) David Bly, Northfield ALC, 801 Washington Street, Northfield, MN 55057, Phone (507) 645-3061, Fax (507) 645-3025, Email: dbly@gvppmail.nfld.k12.mn.us

July 9-15, Tokyo, Japan, **The 8th meeting of the International Democratic Education Conference, IDEC 2000**, National Olympic Memorial Center, hosted by Tokyo Shure, Kageki Asakura, Tokyo Shure 2-11-8 Kishimachi, Kita, Tosko, Japan, 081 333903135 (or call AERO at 800 769-4171)

July 23-25, 2000, Westin Galleria, Houston, TX. **World Future Society 10th Annual Conference**. Theme: Future Focus 2000: Changes, Challenges & Choices. Discussions, workshops, informal interactions. 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 450, Bethesda, MD 20814. Tel: 1-800-989-8274.

August 12, Homeschoolers Activity and Curriculum Fair, **NE PA Homeschoolers**, Holiday Inn, Bartonsville, PA, PO Box 884, East Stroudsburg, PA, 18301, phone: 570 476 9321.

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

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

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PHOTO: #PERON: Vito Peron at Columbia Conference

High Stakes Tests: A Harsh Agenda for America's Children
Remarks by U.S. Senator Paul D. Wellstone (MN), at Teachers College, Columbia University, March 31, 2000

Education is, among other things, a process of shaping the moral imagination, character, skills and intellect of our children, of inviting them into the great conversation of our moral, cultural and intellectual life, and of giving them the resources to prepare to fully participate in the life of the nation and of the world. But today in education there is a threat afoot to which I do not need to call your attention: the threat of high stakes testing being grossly abused in the name of greater accountability, and almost always to the serious detriment of our children.

Allowing the continued misuse of high stakes tests is, in itself, a gross failure of moral imagination, a failure both of educators and of policymakers, who persistently refuse to provide the educational resources necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity to learn for all our children.

That all citizens will be given an equal start through a sound education is one of the most basic, promised rights of our democracy. Our chronic refusal as a nation to guarantee that right for all children, including poor children, is a national disgrace. It is rooted in a kind of moral blindness, or at least a failure of moral imagination, that we do not see that meeting the most basic needs of so many of our children condemns them to lives and futures of frustration, chronic underachievement, poverty, crime and violence. It is a failure which threatens our future as a nation of citizens called to a common purpose, allied with one another in a common enterprise, tied to one another by a common bond.

Today I want to speak out boldly against this trend towards high stakes testing. It is a harsh agenda that holds children responsible for our own failure to invest in their future and in their achievement. I speak out because education has consumed my adult life and education is my passion. I speak out because I was an educator for twenty years before I became a Senator. I speak out because as a Senator, I have been in a school almost every two weeks for the past ten years and I have seen, as you have, the inequality so many children confront. I also have seen how much difference a good school and a good teacher can make for a child. It is based on this experience and on what I have seen and heard about the abuse of high stakes test by many states and school districts across the country that I speak out today.

If there is any question about whether or not we have, as a nation, overemphasized high stakes standardized testing, and if there is any question that this overemphasis has taken so much of the excitement out of teaching and learning for so many people across the country, I would like to open my remarks with some excerpts from an article in the Baton Rouge Advocate earlier this year. As many of you know, Louisiana is in the process of implementing high stakes tests for promotion. This article addresses how schools and students near Baton Rouge are dealing with the preparation and stress of the pending LEAP 1. The test, which lasts five days, will determine, among other things, whether students will be promoted and whether schools will be sanctioned for poor performance.

The article describes one teacher who said, "I'm thinking about letting us have a scream day sometime in March, when we just go outside and scream," and it continues, "her principal . . . is keenly aware of the stress on both students and teachers. He told teachers during a meeting . . . that he expects some students to throw up during the test. He's arranged to have all of the school's janitors on duty to clean up any messes.

It is no wonder that students are stressed. According to the article, "For the past eight weeks, Northwestern's school billboard has been updated daily with the number of school days left until the test. When I read this story, I wonder why we cannot let children be children? Why do we impose this misplaced pressure on children as young as eight years old? When I see what is happening around the country, with more and more states and districts adopting the harsh agenda of high stakes testing policies, I am struck by Bob Chase's comparison of all of these educational trends to the movie, *Field of Dreams*. In my view, it is not that though people are saying, "If we test them, they will perform." In too many places, testing, which is a critical part of systemic educational accountability, has ceased its purpose of measuring educational and school improvement and has become synonymous with it.

Making students accountable for test scores works well on a bumper sticker and it allows many politicians to look good by saying that they will not tolerate failure. But it represents a hollow promise. Far from improving education, high stakes testing marks a major retreat from fairness, from accuracy, from quality and from equity. It is ironic, because standardized tests evolved historically as one way to ensure more equal opportunity in education. They are supposed to be an instrument of fairness because they are graded objectively and allow any person, regardless of background, to demonstrate their skill.

When used correctly, standardized tests are critical for diagnosing inequality and for identifying where we need improvement. They enable us to measure achievement across groups of students so that we can help ensure that states and districts are held accountable for improving the achievement of all students regardless of race, income, gender, limited English proficiency and disability. However, they are not a panacea. The abuse of tests for high stakes purposes has subverted the benefits tests can bring. Using a single standardized test as the sole determinant for graduation, promotion, tracking and ability grouping is not fair and has not fostered greater equality or opportunity for students.

First and foremost, I firmly believe that it is grossly unfair to not graduate, or to hold back a student based on a standardized test if that student has not had the opportunity to learn the material covered on the test. When we impose high stakes tests on an educational system where there are, as Jonathan Kozol says

savage inequalities, and then we do nothing to address the underlying causes of those inequalities, we set children to fail.

So many of you here today have devoted your lives to public education. I do not need to explain to any of you the absurdity of the suggestion that students who attend the poorest schools have anywhere close to the same preparation and readiness as students who attend the wealthiest schools. People talk about using tests to motivate students to do well and using tests to ensure that we close the achievement gap.

This kind of talk is backwards and unfair. We cannot close the achievement gap until we close the gap in investment between poor and rich schools no matter how "motivated" some students are. We know what these key investments are: quality teaching, parental involvement, and early childhood education, to name just a few. But instead of doing what we know will work, and instead of taking responsibility as policy makers to invest in improving students' lives, we place the responsibility squarely on children. It is simply negligent to force children to pass a test and expect that the poorest children, who face every disadvantage, will be able to do as well as those who have every advantage. When we do this, we hold children responsible for our own inaction and unwillingness to live up to our own promises and our own obligations. We confuse their failure with our own. This is a harsh agenda indeed, for America's children.

All of us in politics like to get our picture taken with children. We never miss a "photo op." We all like to say that 'children are our future.' We are all for children until it comes time to make the investment. Then often, despite the talk, when it comes to making the investment in the lives of our children, we come up a dollar short.

Noted civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer used to say, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired." Well I'm sick and tired of symbolic politics. When we say we are for children, we ought to be committed to invest in the health, skills and intellect of our children. We are not going to achieve our goals on a tin can budget. Unless we make a real commitment, unless we put our money where our mouth is, children will continue to fail.

If one does not believe that failure on tests has to do with this crushing lack of opportunity, look at who is failing. In Minnesota, in the first round of testing, 79% of low-income students failed the reading portion of the high school exit exam and 74% failed the math part. These numbers have improved with repeated rounds of testing, but it is clear who is losing out in public education—those with the least opportunity. The pattern extends nationwide. In Massachusetts, African American and Latino students are failing tests at twice the rate of whites. In Texas, the gap between blacks and Latinos and whites is three times. It is unconscionable.

But affording children an equal opportunity to learn is not enough. Even if all children had the opportunity to learn the material covered by the test, we still cannot close our eyes to the hard evidence that a single standardized test is not valid or reliable as the sole determinant in high stakes decisions about students. The 1999 National Research Council report, *High Stakes*, concludes that "no single test score can be considered a definitive measure of a student's knowledge," and that "an educational decision that will have a major impact on a test taker should not be made solely or automatically on the basis of a single test score."

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, 1999 Edition, which has served as the standard for test developers and users for decades, asserts that: "In educational settings, a decision or a characterization that will have a major impact on a student should not be made on the basis of a single test score."

Even test publishers, including Harcourt Brace, CTB McGraw Hill, Riverside and ETS, consistently warn against this practice. For example, Riverside Publishing asserts in *The Interpretive Guide for School Administrators for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills*, "Many of the common misuses (of standardized tests) stem from depending on a single test score to make a decision about a student or class of students."

CTB McGraw Hill writes that "A variety of tests, or multiple measures, is necessary to tell educators what students know and can do . . . the multiple measures approach to assessment is the keystone to valid, reliable, fair information about student achievement."

Politicians and policy makers who continue to push for high stakes tests and educators who continue to use them in the face of this knowledge have closed their eyes to clearly set professional and scientific standards. They demand responsibility and high standards of students and schools while they let themselves

get away with defying the most basic standards of the education profession. It would be irresponsible if a parent or a teacher used a manufactured project on children in a way that the manufacturer says is unsafe. Why do we then honor and declare "accountable" policy makers and politicians who use tests on children a way that the test manufacturers have said is effectively unsafe?

There is no doubt that when mistakes are made, the consequences are devastating. The bad effects of retention in grade have been clearly established in science. You all know the data better than I do. Study after study shows that retention leads to poorer academic performance, higher dropout rates, increased behavioral problems, low self-esteem and higher rates of criminal activity and suicide. Research on high school dropouts indicates that students who do not graduate are more likely to be unemployed or hold positions with little or no career advancement, earn lower wages and be on public assistance.

On a more immediate level, people from New York will remember how 8,600 students were mistakenly held in summer school because their tests were graded incorrectly. When we talk about responsibility, we could be more irresponsible than using an invalid or unreliable measure as the sole determinant of something so important as high school graduation or in-school promotion?

The effects of high stakes testing go beyond their impact on individual students to greatly impact the educational process in general. They have had a deadening effect on learning. Again, research proves this point. Studies indicate that public testing encourages teachers and administrators to focus instruction on content, test format and test preparation. Teachers tend to overemphasize the basic skills, and underemphasize problem-solving and complex thinking skills that are not well assessed on standardized tests. Further, they neglect content areas that are not covered such as science, social studies and the arts.

For example, in Chicago, the Consortium on Chicago School Research concluded that "Chicago's regular year and summer school curricula were so closely geared to the Iowa test that it was impossible to distinguish real subject matter mastery from mastery of skills and knowledge useful for passing this particular test." These findings are backed up by a recent poll in Texas which showed that only 27% of teachers in Texas felt that increased test scores reflected increased learning and higher quality teaching. 80% of teachers said that they neglected subjects not covered by the TAAS exam.

Stories are emerging from around the country about schools where teachers and students are under such pressure to perform that schools actually use limited funds to pay private companies to coach students and teachers in test taking strategies. According to the San Jose Mercury News, schools in East Palo Alto, which is one of the poorest districts in California, paid Stanley Kaplan \$10,000 each to consult with them on test taking strategies.

According to the same article, "schools across California are spending thousands to buy computer programs, hire consultants, and purchase workbooks and materials. They're redesigning spelling tests and math lessons, all in an effort to help students become better test takers." The teacher from Baton Rouge I mentioned before had even bought blank score sheets with bubbles on them so students can practice filling in circles.

The richness and exploration we want our own children to experience is being sucked out of our schools. I was moved by an op-ed I read recently in the New York Times, written by a fifth grade teacher who obviously had a great passion for his work. He said, "But as I teach from day to day ... I no longer see the students in the way I once did—certainly not in the same exuberant light as when I first started teaching five years ago. Where once they were 'challenging' or 'marginal' students, I am now beginning to see 'liability.' Where once there was a student of 'limited promise,' there is now an inescapable deficit that all available efforts will only nominally affect." Children are measured by their score, not their potential, not their diverse talents, not the depth of their knowledge and not their character.

We must never stop demanding that children do their best. We must never stop holding schools accountable. Measures of student performance can include standardized tests, but only when coupled with other measures of achievement, more substantive education reforms and a much fuller, sustained investment in schools.

The battle has already begun. Last month, two Senators, a Democrat and a Republican, introduced an amendment that would have mandated an "end to social promotion" in a clumsy and grossly unfair way. In response, I introduced an amendment that would have modified their amendment by saying that the provisions of their amendment would not apply to any child who had not had proper early childhood

education, had not had the access to Title I, special ed and bilingual education which they deserved, and I not been taught by a fully qualified teacher.

The debate here was quite instructive. One of the Senators said that the fully qualified teacher requirement was a "deal-breaker" because in that Senator's state, there were far too many uncertified, unqualified teachers and that to require that a child be taught by a qualified teacher before they could be retained would "gut the amendment" and make it impossible to end social promotion.

Well, no one could have made my point better. That amendment, and this system of high stakes tests, puts the cart before the horse. It gets the sequence backwards. It loses sight of our fundamental objective provide children with the tools they need to achieve, to think critically and to understand deeply the material they need to master to pass such tests. We cannot get away with making children pay for our failure to provide them with the high quality education they need, deserve and is their right.

You will not be surprised that in this case truth, beauty and justice did not prevail, and my amendment failed. But, we were able to fight and defeat the underlying amendment to end social promotion, which everyone thought would pass. It was a small victory, but I tell you the story to give you some context and give you as sense of the uphill battle that we face.

As a United States Senator, I am absolutely committed to the fight to stop the abuse of high stakes tests. When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization comes to the floor of the Senate, I will introduce an amendment that will require that states and districts use multiple measures of student performance in addition to standardized tests if they are going to use tests as part of a high stakes decision. The amendment will also require that if tests are used, they must be valid and reliable for the purposes for which they are used; must measure what the student was taught; and must provide appropriate accommodations for students with limited English proficiency and disabilities.

I will also continue to take every opportunity, on the Senate floor and elsewhere, to fight to ensure that these high stakes tests are not used unless children are given the tools to learn the material they are being asked to master. In the current climate, with too many policy makers confusing accountability with high-stakes testing, we confront a huge task to get these ideas enacted into law. If they are not enacted, I will at least demand that we get an independent, thorough study of the impact of high stakes tests on children and on education.

Gunnar Myrdal said that ignorance is never random. If we do not know the impact of high stakes tests, we can continue as we are now -- sounding good while doing bad. High stakes tests are part of an agenda that has been sweeping the nation. People use words like 'accountability' and 'responsibility' when they talk about high stakes tests, but what they are being is anything but accountable or responsible. They do not look beyond their words to the harsh reality that underlies them and the harsh agenda that they are imposing on teachers, parents and most of all students.

My legislation, if enacted, would be only a small, first step among the many things we have to do to improve education in this country. But I am committed to that first step. If those amendments are not passed, at least we will begin a national dialogue about this issue. Already, we are starting to get the message out. I am so thankful that you are holding this important conference and for allowing me to be a part of it. You are leading us in the right direction-toward fairness and equity and a love of learning that will last children their lifetimes.

This fight we confront today is not just a fight about tests, or just about ensuring that all our children are educated and educated well. It is time for us to renew our national vow of equal opportunity for every child in America. That's what this fight is all about.

That reminds me of a quote that has motivated me throughout my life. It is my favorite quote. It is from Wendell Phillips, an abolitionist from the 1840's. At that time both political parties were very weary of the slavery issue and they weren't sure how to confront it. But not Wendell, he just said slavery was a moral outrage, that it was unconscionable, and he wouldn't equivocate. He wasn't afraid to speak out.

After he gave a particularly fiery speech about abolition, a friend came up to him and said, "Wendell, why are you so on fire?"

And Wendell turned to his friend and said, "Brother May, I'm on fire because I have mountains of ice before me to melt."

We have mountains of ice before us to melt. Thank you for your energy, your time, your love for children and your passion to do what is right. It has been an honor to be here.

Draft of Statement from New York State Alternative Education Association

The following is a draft of a statement which has been submitted to the executive committee of the NYSAEA and will be voted on by the membership:

To Commissioner Richard Mills and the Members of the New York State Board of Regents
From the New York state Alternative education Association, Re: Regents Exams and local Diplomas

The NYSAEA adamantly opposes the new high school graduation requirement that all high school students pass five Regents examinations. As the alternative high schools and programs that have been serving those high school students at greatest risk throughout New York, we strongly request the immediate reinstatement of the local diploma option for our students. NYSAEA is not opposed to higher standards and endorses the new standards in New York. NYSAEA also is willing to work with the State Education Department and/or the regional BOSES administration to establish a three to five year peer review process by which our alternative high schools and programs can be periodically reviewed. Furthermore, NYSAEA should be involved in any attempt by SED to define "alternative education," knowing that each alternative school or program has been and must continue to be, responsive to the unique needs of the community being served.

Letter to the Editor of the New York Times about Commissioner Mills' Decision about Public Alternative Schools

By Jerry Mintz

We've just heard the news that Commissioner Mills is going to require all New York State students to take and pass the Regents to get a high school diploma.

It's all about monopolies and control. It's also about expediency and hypocrisy. Commissioner Mills came to New York from Vermont, where part of his reputation there was made by promotion of portfolio assessment. His shooting down of a reasonable and practical request for an alternative form of assessment by a coalition of innovative schools is not only hypocritical, but it is plainly wrong. The question is not whether these students COULD pass the Regents. The question is whether they should be forced to divert their studies from a proven approach which prepares students to be life-long learners to one which dumbs them down with teach-to-the-test rote learning.

There are two opposite movements going on now in education. One, in reaction to the ineffectiveness of the current system, has led to a million and a half people nation-wide choosing home education, and has also led to the charter school movement, which has gone from the first charter in 1991 to 1800 today. This movement also includes the new public alternative schools in New York City.

The opposite movement, coming from within the bowels of the educational establishment, fostered by those who simply cannot see outside the box, is the "standardization movement." It is from that source that springs the requirement for all students to take the Regents. It comes from these same bureaucrats who can only think that if things are bad that they simply need more homework, more teaching to the test, more Regents, something that never worked, and will never work.

This "movement" will be dead in a few years, just as the 80's "back to basics" idea ran aground, for the same reasons. The only question is how much damage it will do before it runs its course. For example, will it effectively kill off the new and exciting public alternatives in New York State? The fact is that the old paradigm of pouring facts and a set curriculum into students' heads for them to spit back on tests will not effectively prepare them to live satisfying lives in this new millennium. It seems that everyone but professional educators knows that. What we need is to take a more learner-centered approach, allowing students to retain confidence in themselves as learners, empowering them to be able to find the answers to their own questions, preparing them to be life-long learners.

This is a dark day, but it is far from the end. Home educators have discovered that colleges don't care more if they have a high school diploma. Many colleges will accept students without them, if they demonstrate their abilities in other ways. They are also discovering with distance learning and the Web that they can indeed educate themselves and don't need "professional educators" at hand. What this is all about is the educational monopoly which is crumbling. It is about the insiders trying to hold on to their trillion-dollar business, and about parents and students finding out that they don't need or want their services any more.

My advice to Commissioner Mills: Change your decision. Open your eyes to the changes in learning happening all around you, or you and your bureaucracy will rapidly become an anachronism.

In Your Backyard: Florida's Online Education Experiment

by Daryl Lease, November 04, 1999

Prominently displayed at the entrance to one of Florida's newest high schools is this motto: "Any time, any place, any path, any pace." It is a striking contrast to the attitude at many schools these days. After the shootings in Littleton, Colo., and elsewhere, anxious and bewildered school officials are not offering many options of the "any" variety. They are busily seeking more ways to control students, even to the point of requiring see-through book bags. But at this particular school in Florida, which recently began its third year, you will not find metal detectors at the front door, or police dogs sniffing lockers for drugs. At this school, students set the tone and are pretty much free to come and go as they please. It is so laid back, in fact, that if there were a school uniform, it might be pajamas. It is called The Florida High School, and it exists only on the Internet.

The school is one of several dozen online programs launched by public-school systems nationwide in the past few years. And if the growth and success of this school is any indication, we will be seeing more like it. Twelve hundred students from around the state are enrolled in Florida's online high school, taking their pick from 51 courses ranging from the basics to the advanced. Most students "attend" class before or after they attend public or private schools during the day. They join home-schooled students, who comprise about a quarter of the student body.

The Three Xs, by **Idit Harel**

The most important skills we can foster in our children are what I call the three Xs: eXploring, eXpressing, and eXchanging ideas by using the new digital media. And one of the best tools for learning these skills is the Internet.

The first X, eXploring, takes advantage of kids' natural passion for learning and discovery. We all know that you have to give children an open, safe place in which to explore. In this open space, it's not so much what your child makes as it is that she is in the driver's seat of her own learning experience. That's when the learning resonates -- when a child discovers for herself rather than being told. The Net can be the ideal learning environment for such open-ended discovery, the kind that creates a passion and desire for learning itself. And children who are confident explorers develop resourceful and flexible minds.

Second is eXpressing, or learning how to use a vast palette of tools to become designers, builders and architects of your own ideas. The Net expands the notion of a tool into infinite dimensions with its veritable warehouse of creative instruments that includes sounds, color, and motion. From building a digital skyscraper to designing an animated webpage, the Net lets children create, work and play in ways they never could before. For kids, mastering the art of self-expression is not about attending high-tech art class; it's about using digital media to become versatile and effective communicators of ideas.

The third X, eXchanging, is the sharing of ideas with others. It is my belief that real learning only occurs in a social context, in an environment where you can exchange ideas, ask questions and work with peers and experts. Moreover, through eXchanging, kids become active participants in their learning, not passive absorbers of information. Kids also learn about teamwork and the benefits of collaboration when they share ideas, thoughts and creations. Knowing how to share ideas creatively and collaboratively enhances and integrates a child's learning and opens up new learning opportunities through interactive exchange.

INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN KEARSEY ABOUT THE FOUNDING OF CROSSROADS SCHOOL, Brewster, NY

Brian and Karen were involved with a school in California that was part of a business. They were going to homeschool their daughter. They lived out in the country and their 11-year-old said, "Mom is going to have to drive me all over the county to have friends. You have a factory with 25 people working for you, dad, enough room in the back. Why don't we get books and a computer and have our own school." George Taylor, the owner of that company, is an inventor with about 20 patents in the plumbing industry. It didn't take him long to look back on his own education and realize how miserable he was for many years. He figured it took him ten years out of high school to undo the damage to his creative, spiritual and intuitive being before he got back to his natural graces. That's when the ideas, the inventions, and the patents started flowing. CM

BRIAN KEARSEY:

They got me to open up a school right on site for the employees children. I was at that time a disgruntled Montessori teacher. My wife, Kathy, and I had both been Montessori trained. We were both miserable in school for years. We had read all these wonderful things of what education could be if you followed the lead of the child and you provide a rich environment. There could be wonderful results and spontaneity and joy but most of the schools we worked in were real rigid and structured. We weren't seeing that real fluid joy and spontaneous learning taking place.

We met right at the right time; the owners of the company didn't know anything about opening up a school but they had a vision and they couldn't find a teacher that wanted to break out of the mold a little. They had about 70 applicants and they interviewed 35 teachers, and everyone was cut out of the same cookie-cutter mold. They were in desperation; and my wife and I were just about ready to give up on teaching at the time. Our goals and their vision dovetailed beautifully so they hired me to start the school; and we got a little room schoolhouse, homeschool resource center off the ground that did very well for many years.

We were on CNN three times, ABC The Home Show, we have a beautiful portfolio of all the times we were in national magazine, we spoke at the United Nations Conference in Salt Lake City about education for the International Year of the Child Conference in 1995. Even though we only had about 15 children in the whole school, we actually affected a lot more than that because we networked with several of the local homeschool groups. We'd work together on different projects and the kids would get together for various projects and sports -- typical homeschool resource community-type things that really enriched our environment and the homeschoolers choices. It was an on-site school. The children and parents would ride together to work. With only 15 students and a couple of vans, we had a lot of mobility; we spent time out the hills, at the parks, the museums, and beaches.

We didn't take kids from outside the factory school on trips on a regular basis because of insurance liabilities. We would have the homeschoolers over to our site on any number of occasions, however.

Kathy and I are both from the East Coast: Hudson River Valley and Long Island. We went to California after college on a whim. The original intention was after we got married and we were going to spend a couple of years on the West Coast. Once we started this school and it took off we ended up staying for 14 years. We had a three-year old, though, who got old enough to start missing grandma and missing the family, and that tugged at our heartstrings. We ended up giving it up out there and coming back with the idea to build on what we had learned. As good as the school was in California, we were a little limited by the size of the company. We wanted something about double or triple the size, which is what we have now in Brewster, New York.

The first thing we did was contact some homeschool groups. We weren't sure where we wanted to set up. We spent a year living out of suitcases and boxes in different living rooms and spare rooms of our family while we researched the area. The homeschooling community was enormously hospitable. They really opened up their living rooms and had potlucks and luncheons. We spoke about our vision of a unique combination private school/homeschool resource center. In turn, they gave us info on the area, where the good alternative schools were and where they weren't. We tried to assess the need, where a good place to set up would be. What we found is that you could pretty much just put your finger on a map and point to it, and they need it. Other than the Free School in Albany, there are very few alternatives out there for the homeschool community.

We treat the children like individual human beings and somewhere along the way, that's become a revolutionary idea. My wife and I are both college educated. We love literacy and the arts. We want kids be able to balance their checkbooks, read the back of an aspirin bottle, and function in society with academic skills. Those things have become so rote and schools treat everyone like one collective child; they're so dry and lifeless. The truth is that kids are all so different. Some kids don't even need teachers; they move from one spontaneous project to another. There are other kids that need a lot more structure and guidance. Certain children are very happy in a fairly traditional structure where they're looking to the teacher for guidance. They're as happy as the day is long.

In 1996 we moved into a perfect location in Brewster, NY. We had screened for zoning issues because we wanted a home type environment and atmosphere but we also knew we wanted to use it as a commercial venture, as a school. We got a spot on a major drag in Brewster that was zoned commercial in a residential neighborhood. We're just on the border of Danbury, CT, just over the Westchester line.

KATHY KEARSEY: The town's regulations and local officials weren't very open minded and that made difficult. We had to do some educating. I guess we were good at that - we are teachers!

Brian: We moved into the building in June of 1996 and spent the summer fixing it up. We went to different homeschool functions to promote the school and meet people. By August we had 15 elementary students lined up and waiting to go. So we literally moved into the town in June and two months later we were going to open up with the first room full, which is unheard of. That's when the local bureaucracy started getting involved; between the DEP, the DOT, the County Board of Health, the Zoning Board, the Planning Board, the host of regulatory agencies, it was just a maze of red tape. They inundated us from the beginning.

We were competition for the local school system, but I don't know how conscious that was. It certainly doesn't take too many people on the school board to know too many people on the zoning board before regulations get written in such a way as to make it challenging. I don't think you could go into a court of law and prove they were trying to squelch the competition. It's so easy to manipulate the laws. I don't even think the fear of competition was the big thing; it was plain old bureaucracy. The people we met actually seem to like us, most of them.

The most disheartening thing was that there were no health and safety considerations whatsoever. We had no problems in those areas that held us up. There was a lot of "fill out this form in triplicate and go to the back of the line and we'll see you in three months." And then we go back in three months and they'd say, "Oh here, we forgot to give you page 6 and subparagraph #3 that has to be read over and signed." This was to get Planning Board approval for the whole project and then working with the Building Department to get the blueprints approved, even though there were no structural changes being done.

It was three full school years before we got our approval to open up. It was a nightmare. We were ready to open the 2nd year but we were always one more piece of paper, one more approval away from opening. Then, in the middle of August, they look and say, "Oh my goodness! You have a C-6.5 building and a G-use! Your stairs are supposed to be 37 1/2" wide. They're only 36 1/2"! Don't worry, we'll have you your waiver by Thanksgiving." And my jaw would drop, "But I have 15 students starting in two weeks!"

Even after we got through that stuff, other "well-intentioned" things started happening. Like, at some point society decided that we should make our building accessible to the handicapped. That's a wonderful, noble thing. But they told us a whole year later that we have to go back in and rip the building apart and spend \$30,000 more to put the handicap ramp in and it can't be put in anyway because of the nature of the building. They're willing to let 15 kids and a family wait a whole 'nother year to go through a whole 'nother set of waiver procedures and almost lose everything they had that they worked for their entire lives.

We didn't have what it would take to start anywhere else. It was an all-or-nothing proposition. We had the kids waiting, and parents who were so committed. We didn't know what we were going to do when the Planning Board just decimated us. The parents called and got together and opened up their living rooms. We actually had school on wheels; we went from living room to living room. If for some reason we couldn't use a living room -- a couple of times we actually snuck the kids into our home (which is where the schoolroom was). The six kids in the van would have to bend down so a local Zoning Board or Building Inspector wouldn't see us going into the school. We'd have school with the shades down.

We could only fit six kids in our Volkswagon van and had to go from house to house so we had to keep it down to six kids. They were all technically homeschooling at that point. They were older students who were already homeschooling. My wife took a group of younger preschoolers.

In the middle of our approval process, we had another "well-intentioned" goal of society come in and throw a big snafu. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection got involved. Westchester, Dutchess, and Putnam Counties signed a watershed agreement with New York City and they extremely restricted land uses in this area. We were considering buying the house next door, but we're 300 feet from reservoir and they won't let us expand at all.

Parents are no longer using their own common sense for whether their kids are being educated. They're looking more and more to standardized tests. Then the teachers are under pressure to perform for these artificial jumps. There is nothing wrong with wanting kids who can read and write and balance a checkbook. The reality of it is that it's an artificial measure of true intelligence. There are many bright, articulate, creative children who don't perform well on those kinds of tests. We definitely over-emphasize their importance in our society.

We feel a lot of parents expect standardized tests. We reserve the right to leave it up to parents. I don't mind administering the tests, as long as parents know that we're not going to teach for the tests and they understand that it's just one small ingredient in the mix. The pressure is more from society in general than from the state. As far as I know the private schools are not required to give the tests. But New York State Education Law requires substantially equivalent education. For most private schools, the easiest way to meet that is to use the standardized tests.

As far as violence in schools, the kids are 5, 6, or 7 and having little social problems on the playground, for the most part, they're left to their own devices (in traditional schools). Like Lord of the Flies. I know what was like just going to a small Catholic school in Rockland County - the meanness, the teasing. The playground was a cruel place. They're left to their own devices for the most part, unsupervised. You get the lowest common denominator. We do a lot of our teaching on the playground, monitoring their interactions and planting little seeds. When kids do the stinky things to each other and are a little bit mean, they need someone to slow them down, and plant a seed, and let their own conscience start engaging.

Kathy: There is a lot of segregation of parents of students in many public schools. They don't really allow the parents to come in and have a word, and really regard, or want them there. We invite parents to come stay, stick around, and share their stories. That makes a big difference - having other adults present at the school. It makes a big impression. I think there are a lot of angry kids out there because they don't get to see their parents enough during the day. It's a long day to be in a different place. I think there's a sense of abandonment that some of the kids have. They're angry about it.

Brian: I think one of the things we see daily is our younger students who have not been in government-type schools, or even traditional private schools - those classrooms are flowing. The upper elementary and high schoolers that I'm dealing with in my room - the damage has been done. In the room I have, there's so much therapy as academics or pursuing passions. I'm dealing with kids that were miserable for years and they're all carrying this emotional baggage with them. We're trying to peel back the layers and heal that.

We have 44 students now and are close to capacity. The majority of them come to us as a full-time private school. A good minority are homeschoolers who come to us for three afternoons or four mornings. We'll bend over backwards to meet the needs of the community of homeschoolers. One family might come in just to have a good social environment and to do projects. Another family may come in for academic purposes.

At this point, we're deciding whether or not we want to go through the process to get approved by New York State for diplomas. Traditionally minded people in the community would find that a plus. But as far as the colleges and universities, they are easy to deal with without the traditional New York State approved diploma because they're much more practical. The local high schools have their blinders on; they're so shortsighted. If a junior in our school wanted to transfer back to public school, they would be inundated with minutiae. Where are the 3 credits in this and 2 credits in that? Yet the colleges want a well-rounded, bright articulate kid with an area of passion.

JERRY MINTZ KEYNOTES MANITOBA ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

PHOTO #3 Jerry Mintz at the University of Winnipeg

On October 21, and I arrived in Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I was picked up this morning at 8:15 by Paul Kershner who drove me to a school called Collegiate at the University of Winnipeg. This is a 100 year old school which is unique in Manitoba in that adults or students can come there and take high school credits set up in the same that colleges would set up their credits. The campus is on the University of Winnipeg campus. Students can also take University classes for which they have the prerequisites at the same time they are taking high school classes. Each student's program is very individualized. However, it is important to realize that every credit has to be approved by the Department of Education, so in that sense they have a provincial curriculum that is mandated. There can also be school initiated credits and even student initiated credits, but these have to go through a two month program of

approval. Also in Manitoba, they have public school choice the same way Minnesota does, in that any student can choose any school that they want to go to as long as there is space in the school. This forces the schools to actually mount publicity campaigns and make their schools as student-friendly as possible so that students want to go there. Paul teaches at an alternative school that is a vocational school that has about 300 students but room for more and they are always campaigning for more students.

PHOTO #4 Paul Kirshner in front of his school

Many, if not the majority, of students at these alternative schools are Native American indigenous peoples, as is a high proportion of the inner city population. These inner city people have gotten disconnected from their language and culture, and there are a lot of problems with gangs. There is one alternative school that was started as Argyle Alternative School and eventually became mostly populated by Indians; the school was eventually turned over to the Indian community so that they could put in Native American teachers, culture, and language. It has become the Children of the Earth School. There has been a second Argyle School created, which I also visited.

When I went to the morning session at Collegiate one of the big questions was, "Is Collegiate an alternative school?" I showed them a little of the video, *Why Do These Kids Love School?* about public alternatives in the United States. They concluded that many of the values that were in that video were values that they held. They also considered that their approach was basically learner-centered approach. We spent a lot of time talking about the standards movement and how it handicaps teachers at their school. The discussion lasted about an hour and a half. Afterward, a number of them were convinced that they really did belong in this movement and wanted to be connected to it.

Later we visited Argyle School. It has its own building. It has mostly risk kids, but technically is a choice school and any student could go there for any reason they wished. They do not necessarily have to be labeled to come there. After meeting the principal and some of the teachers, I went into a class of perhaps 20 students. We discussed democratic decision making process.

When I began to tell them a little about my organization, at first there wasn't much of a reaction on the part of the students until one of them asked me why I was there. I explained that I was going to be a keynote speaker at a conference the next day and wanted to see some of the alternative schools. We continued talking a while about the worldwide movement, the attack on Summerhill, the idea of the standards problem. I asked them if they wanted to see a demonstration of democratic process and they said they did. I talked about the decision making process and they made an agenda of three items. The first was trips, the second was about having a judicial committee, and the third was about selection of teachers. The meeting process became more and more powerful and had more involvement -- it was about as much as I could do to keep up with all the students who were participating.

Later on, the main teacher told me there were a number of students involved in that discussion who never ordinarily spoke in a group. There was one particular girl who was against the trip idea, who said that everyone should just be concentrated on passing everything and graduating. The majority of students felt that organizing a trip would be good for them, for the school and a good educational experience. I told them some stories about how we had managed to do traveling in my school on no budget and had gone to places like New Orleans at Mardi Gras and to the Bahamas. This inspired them to believe that they could do something similar. After considerable discussion, they passed that proposal, six votes to five, with three abstentions. This had tal

most of the time that we had. Some of the students who were supposed to go to another class wound up staying longer because they didn't want to miss out on the process. They wanted immediately to skip to the third item: selection of teachers. We began to get a little into the discussion. Some students thought it would be terrible and students shouldn't be involved with that process. Others felt that it could be helpful and that students would look at things from a different point of view and an important one. We finished with the students considering the implementation of the democratic process at that school. I gave them e-mail addresses if they wanted to follow up on either the trip idea or the democratic process. The feeling was that it was a very powerful session.

PHOTO #5, 6 (crop to left) Students at Argy School

During the process of visiting these schools I realized that it might be useful for me to spend my time at the keynote taking about organizing this group of teachers into a stronger group of alternative educators. Also, I thought we might consider voting on a proposal that relates to the problems presented by this mandated curriculum and this standards movement with all of its testing.

The evening before we went out to Bob Kershner's place. I had a group of ten people who are involved with alternative education. We had some interesting discussions and I showed some of the video of Summerhill and of the IDEC conference. They were actually able to squeeze in their executive meeting to decide who was going to be president next year.

The next day Paul brought me to the conference at Gordon Bell High School. A number of them had come for a nonviolent, crisis-intervention workshop. About half of them were alternative educators, but most of them were interested in alternative education. Some of them were Native Americans who had come from other parts of the province. I decided that my talk was going to be of a more practical nature in an attempt to help the organization to become enhanced in its services for alternative educators and perhaps even be able to take a stand on things if they wanted to. So after some background and a little orientation on what is going on in alternative education around the world, I asked if they wanted to do this, and they did want to move in that direction. Ultimately, we were able to take a vote on the issue of standardization and the imposition of arbitrary standards, and testing in relationship to that, and how it handicaps alternative educators. The vote was heavily in favor of adopting the essence of the statement that was produced at the NCACS conference. We also announced that we would have a follow-up workshop to fine-tune that statement and to talk about how the organization might be able to set up a conference just for alternative educators, produce newsletters, and take a step upward as an organization.

It was good that a couple of people from the executive committee of this group came to this workshop from the Manitoba Alternative Schools Special Area Group. These groups were meeting all over Manitoba this particular day which was an in-service day. The educators from all over the province chose which one of these to go to, and this was the one the executive committee had chosen. Part of the thought at this workshop was to get beyond just the Special Area Group meeting once a year. They already have organized a couple of youth conferences every year. They thought that they would then have a meeting of alternative educators on the next day.

During lunch, I sat with three of the teachers from the Songadaywin Indian School. I had briefly visited the school the day before. One of the teachers

there said that she has a third grade daughter, who last year had been fine when she had an enthusiastic teacher, but this year she has a very authoritarian one and she is becoming turned off on school. She didn't know about elementary alternatives, so we're going to try to get her information on these elementary alternatives.

PHOTO #8 Students at Songadaywin School

After lunch, I did the second workshop, on aboriginal schools and education. Some attendees were from a Band Council School some distance away. Gerry Moore talked about inner city school called Children of the Earth, an aboriginal survival school, publicly funded. It evolved out of Argyle. Moore was involved with that school. He had noticed that almost all the kids there were aboriginal and he started a process that would turn the school over to Native American leaders. After a considerable fight, he was able to arrange it. One of the staff there says a problem now is that he feels like the students are not feeling empowered as they ought to be and that is one of the questions he brought up at this session.

Someone brought up a similar question from the Band Council. He said that he wondered what to do to keep kids from dropping out. I suggested more empowerment on the part of the kids might make the difference. We talked about that process a while. He talked about the political problems in having that happen.

The new President of the Association is Rhoda from Songadawin School. The year's president was Greg Speicer.

MANY STATES LOWER STANDARDS DUE TO FEAR OF FAILURE, by Jacques Sternberg, Ed.Net Briefs, November 29, 1999

The tough academic standards that state policy makers and others have created over the last three years as they imposed high-stakes tests on students are beginning to yield unwanted results. Few of the students are making the new grades, many are at risk of dropping out or being held back, their parents are venting frustration and school systems are beginning to pull back. The states are acknowledging that often because of financial concerns, they have not put in place the training programs for teachers, the extra help for students and the other support necessary to meet suddenly accelerated standards. In some instances, they have also suggested that they may have expected too much, too soon. The state that is believed to have retrenched the furthest is Wisconsin, which acceded to parent demands last summer that it withdraw a test that every student would have had to pass to graduate from high school. Other states or systems lowering standards include Arizona, Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and California.

DISTRICTS USE LAW AGAINST PARENTS OF TRUANT STUDENTS by Robyn Meredith, The San Diego Union-Tribune, January 16, 2000

Public school districts across the nation are teaming up with prosecutors to fight truancy, threatening jail time and fines for parents of children who chronically skip school. These actions are the latest in an attempt by the public schools to hold students to higher educational standards and to hold their parents to higher standards of accountability. Around the country, schools that have tried less severe methods to get students to class are losing patience with chronic truants and threatening to punish their parents. Most states have truancy laws, but many are beginning aggressively to enforce laws that allow judges to punish truants' parents. A few are passing law to toughen parental penalties. Across the United States, school systems have reported some initial successes with the policies and many teachers and school administrators support the policies. The American Civil Liberties Union is troubled by the notion of holding parents responsible for the actions of their children and questions whether such policies will help.

25 STATES CONSIDERING VOUCHER BILLS by Michael Janofsky, The New York Times, January 31, 2000

More than 25 state legislatures are considering bills that would create some type of system in which public dollars would be used for private and parochial schools. Experts who have studied the public and private financing of education say support for school vouchers is growing so rapidly especially in poor neighborhoods, that more cities and states will eventually implement program through legislation or statewide ballot initiatives. Only five public voucher programs are operating at this time: Milwaukee, Cleveland, Florida, Minnesota and Arizona. Each of these programs serves a relatively small percentage of children. The slow pace of acceptance of voucher programs is largely due to efforts of politically active and well-organized opponents, including unions like the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. They contend that using public dollars to help some students get into private schools hurts those left behind by taking money away from teacher salaries, school construction and teaching materials

THOUSANDS USING ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION by Tamara Henry, USA Today, February 3, 2000

According to a report from the National Center for Education Information, more than 24,000 teachers were certified through alternative routes last year, three times the number ten years ago. The Center predicts that alternative certification programs will increase as states face teacher shortages and increasing enrollments. Officials estimate 210,000 new teachers will be needed every year for the next ten years. States are recruiting retirees, former military personnel and college graduates who took no teaching courses, offering special training before certifying them. At least 125,000 teachers have been certified through alternative routes since the mid-1980s. 4 states and the District of Columbia had alternative programs last year. Only 8 had them in 1983

HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS SCORE HIGHER ON TESTS by Daniel Golden, The Wall Street Journal, February 11, 2000

As the homeschool movement grows larger and more diverse, evidence is mounting that homeschooling, once confined to the political and religious fringe, has achieved results not only par with public education, but in some ways surpassing it. The data offer little comfort to those who advocate a standardized curriculum as the best hope for improving American education. 1-1.5 million children nationwide are being taught at home. Homeschoolers outnumber the 400,000 students attending charter schools, a more mainstream alternative. Total public and private school enrollment in the United States is about 50 million. The SAT and the ACT have begun asking exam takers whether they were homeschooled. Last year, 3,257 ACT and 2,219 SAT takers identified themselves as homeschooled. Self-identified homeschoolers have scored higher than the national average on the ACT for the past three years, scoring an average 22.7 compared with 21 for traditionally schooled students. On the SAT, homeschoolers scored an average 1,083 (verbal 548, math 535), 67 points above the national average of 1,016.

Announcing two great new books on educational alternatives

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 subject 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.

"Matthew was a popular member of staff, allowing Summerhill to work its magic on him. . . . This is a candid view of his time with us—it is a very enjoyable read, and it raises some important, if uncomfortable questions about modern methods of childrearing."

--Zoe Readhead, Principal of Summerhill School and daughter of founder A.S. Neill.

"The reappearance of Summerhill on the world stage couldn't be more timely. Matthew Appleton is an excellent guide, thanks to a prose filled with immediacy and passion. Old Neill would be proud." --Chris Mercogliano, Co-director of the Albany Free School, and author of *Making It Up As We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School*.

PHOTO #10 Student at Albany Free school

Creating Learning Communities: Models, Resources, and New Ways of Thinking About Teaching and Learning

by The Coalition for Self Learning, edited by Ron Miller

Thirty leading innovators in alternative education, cooperative homeschooling, and sustainable community development (including Jerry Mintz, Pat Farenga, Linda Dobson, Wayne Jennings, Katharine Houk, Dayle Bethel, Don Glines, and others) demonstrate how learning communities could replace conventional schools as the primary educational model of the twenty-first century. The authors explain how they started collaborative lifelong learning centers and explore the practical and philosophical issues involved. These centers are community-based, learner-driven, and committed to participatory democracy. The book contains an annotated resource directory listing organizations, publications, and established centers.

Reviewing this volume, John Taylor Gatto said that the authors are "people of uncommon good sense" who "answer the right questions which school politicians always forget to ask. An eye-opening book, worth reading out loud to your friends."

These books are published by the **Foundation for Educational Renewal**, (also the publisher of *Paths of Learning* magazine). For more information, or to order the books, write P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733 ; call (800) 639-4122 , or visit the Foundation's website: www.PathsOfLearning.net

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***BACK ISSUES of *AERO-gramme* 1 through 28 \$5 each.**

***THE ALMANAC OF EDUCATION CHOICES**, Editor in Chief Jerry Mintz, Associate Editors Raymond Solomon, a 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 U.S. add \$10-\$15 for air mail postage. **Special for paid subscribers, only \$15 plus \$3 postage**

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

***The HANDBOOK OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**, Editor in Chief Jerry Mintz, Associate Editors Raymond Solomon, and Sidney Solomon. With over 7,300 educational alternatives described, chapters by Ron Miller, Mary Kay Raywid, Jerry Mintz, Pat Farenga, Dave Lehman, Tim Seldin, and others, many indexes. Hard cover reference book published by Macmillan and The Solomon Press. **\$75**

Contact AERO for sets of labels from the Handbook/Almanac database. Entire list is \$60 per thousand names. Subsets can be custom-created.

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

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

NEW! Campus-Free College Degrees, Thorson's Guide to Accredited College Degrees through Distance Learning, by Marcie Kisner Thorson. Correspondence study, experiential learning, independent study group study, seminars: organized by subject area, type state. **\$24.95**

NEW! National Charter Schools Directory, published by the Center for Education Reform. It is the 1999 list of all the charter schools in the country, by state, in alphabetical order. **\$15**

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

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

PHONE CONSULTATIONS:

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

AUDIOCASSETTES:

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

Independent Alternative Schools

- #4: John Potter, founder of the New School of Northern VA.
- #7: Live from NCACS conference in Chicago. Interviews with Marvin Garcia about Pedro Alt Campos School, and with a teacher at Clonlara School.
- #8: Steve Boncheck of Harmony School in Indiana.
- #15: Joe Weber of Contra Costa Alternative School.
- #17 Les Garber of Horizons School, Atlanta.
- # 25: Mary Leue, founder of the Free School in Albany.
- #52. Grassroots Free School Founder Pat Seery, report on Renaissance charter consultation
- #107 Chris Mercogliano, Albany's Free School, Renaissance trip
- # 115 The Free School Live Out and Kimberly Isaksson's Poetry
- #116 Mary Addams Interviews Marshal Fritz of Separation of School and State Alliance
- #118 Boarding alternative schools: Horizons, Arthur Morgan, the Meeting School, Stonesoup
- #121 Amy Cook and Chambrá of Venice Hills School, CA
- # 126 Play Mountain Place, CA
- # 132 From NCACS CO Conf, new NCACS staff, etc
- #171 Brian Kearsley and saga of Crossroads School

Charter Schools

- #20: Elaine Young, about the NYS Charter bill.
- #97. Joe Nathan, "father" of charter school movement.
- #108 The demise of Cato Charter School
- #114 Arnold Greenberg and Liberty School, Maine

Homeschooling

- #5: Homeschoolers Leni and Anthony Santoro. She talks about a lending library of educational games and toys she has developed.
- #10: Andy Smallman, founder of Puget Sound Community School, Seattle.
- #11: Interview with Professor Margit Watts, expert on educational uses of Internet.
- #19: David Colfax, CA homeschooler.
- #47 Homeschool parent Loretta Heuer
- #83. Clearwater School, with Stephanie Sarantos and Cory.
- #92. Pathfinder Learning Center, with Josh Hornick and students.
- #99: Mary Addams and son Brad demonstrate question class, organic curriculum.
- #100: Marilyn Mosley of Laurel Springs with staff and students.
- #103. Glen Blomgren of Christa McAuliffe Academy, with students.
- #111 Betsy Herbert and South St. (homeschool resource) Centre at Goddard Reunion
- #112 Andy Smallman and Puget Sound Community School
- #119 Pat Montgomery and Clonlara School
- #124 Jan Smith, homeschooler and owner, freecomputers.com
- # 128 Ann Hodges, homeschooler, and NYS Home Ed. Network
- #WBAI 2 Jerry Mintz is interviewed by Basir Umchowi about homeschool resource centers

Public Schools

- #21: Mike Denisenko, Graduate of School Within a School, Brookline, MA.
- #26. Dr. Robert Ferris, founder of New Orleans Free School
- #53: Ten signs you need to find an alternative, with Mary Addams, Jerry Mintz

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

History of Education

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

Alternative School Alumni

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

International Alternative Schools

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

Self-Help

- #13: Joanna Camp, about remineralizing the earth, and Ron Miller, editor of *Great Ideas Education*.
- #31. Futurist and author Robert Theobald
- #57. Daria Brzinski discusses children and holistic medicine
- #141 Jeff Grossberg, consulting for building up non-profits
- #146 Dr. Dennis Jensen, Inet Library
- #157 Madelin Suozo, Celestial Harvest
- #158 Stu Fleashman on college financing, from 6 Flags in NJ
- #162 Matthew Cross, self-educated non-profit business consultant
- #179 Chris Mercogiano of Albany's Free School on "ADD" and Ritalin

Miscellaneous

- #6: Live from Youth Summit in MA, Chris Kawicki, a Hampshire College graduate starting a r school in VT, and with a Berea College student.
- #40 Author, Morty Lefcoe, changing your paradigm.

#61. Role of father in education: Matt Minafo, Bill Heuer, Chris Mercogliano
#80: Eerie Halloween stories.
#86: Election day, discussion of what age people should vote, with 13, 14, 15 yr old callers.
#110 The School of Living and Heathcote Community
#156 Michael Lalvani, table tennis
#174 Ouida Mintz tells story of her life in music

VIDEOS

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

* **New video of Puget Sound Community school, Clearwater School, the democracy workshop Renaissance School, and video of radio show interview of Clearwater School founder and student at 7 America studio in Seattle. \$25**

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

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

*Two-hour video of the **DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS CONFERENCE** at HADERA SCHOOL in Israel, April 1991. Includes tour of Hadera School. **\$25**

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

CONTACT AERO FOR VIDEOS OF OUR OTHER RUSSIAN TRIPS

***SUMMERHILL VIDEO.** Two videos in one: the 1990 International Alternative School Conference at Summerhill, interviews of Summerhill students and alumni as well as vivid footage of the Summerhill end-of-term celebration. A Summerhill's 70th anniversary celebration in August, 1991, featuring more alumni interviews, and a Summerhill democratic meeting. **We also have a 1995 tape of Sands School and Summerhill. \$25 each**

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

***Transcript of Nellie Dick and the Modern School! \$5**

CONTACT AERO FOR FOUR OTHER MODERN SCHOOL VIDEOS

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

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

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

***Two WPIX TV shows about Homeschooling and Alternative Education.** In the first, Jerry Mintz introduces alternatives in the tri-state area, with on-site visitation of the Long Island Homeschoolers, and Manhattan Country School. In the second, a WPIX interviewer in the studio grills Jerry and two homeschoolers. One parent started homeschooling because her son had cancer, and the schools refused to teach him. She homeschooled, and when was cured, returned to find he had passed his class. If you want, we'll ad the interview with Jerry Mintz and Jenifer Goldman on CBS Up to the Minute, in which they discusses their books. **\$25**

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

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