

*a magazine for the alumni/ae of the Toronto Waldorf School*

6

2008/2009

*outofbounds*





I LOOK INTO THE WORLD, WHEREIN THERE SHINES THE SUN,  
WHEREIN THERE GLEAM THE STARS, WHEREIN THERE LIE THE  
STONES, THE PLANTS THEY LIVE AND GROW, THE BEASTS THEY  
FEEL AND LIVE, AND HUMAN BEINGS TO SPIRIT GIVE A DWELLING  
IN THE SOUL. I LOOK INTO THE SOUL THAT DWELLS WITHIN ME  
GOD'S SPIRIT LIVES AND MOVES, LIGHT OF SUN AND SOUL, IN  
HEIGHTS OF WORLDS WITHOUT IN DEPTHS OF SOUL WITHIN.  
SPIRIT OF GOD, TO THEE I TURN, THAT STRENGTH AND  
GRACE AND SKILL FOR LEARNING AND FOR WORK IN ME MAY LIVE  
AND GROW. I LOOK INTO THE WORLD, WHEREIN THERE SHINES  
THE SUN, WHEREIN THERE GLEAM THE STARS, WHEREIN THERE  
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AND SOUL, IN HEIGHTS OF WORLDS WITHOUT IN DEPTHS OF  
SOUL WITHIN. SPIRIT OF GOD, TO THEE I TURN, THAT STRENGTH



# **TWS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF WALDORF EDUCATION IN CANADA**

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## Celebrating 40 years of community spirit

**T**eam work. Who can function without it? From middle school camping trips to Just Desserts theatre performances, any Toronto Waldorf School student, parent, teacher, alumnus or alumna knows that “working together” is part of our curriculum.


When founding editor Katja Rudolph passed the proverbial **outofbounds** torch – after seeing the magazine from its inception through to its fifth edition (and helping to map out the content of the edition you’re currently holding in your hands) – a small army of individuals stepped in to ensure that this magazine would still make its way to your mailbox.

It’s true: My role as “editor” is a bit of a misnomer. Lest anyone think that the work that we see in this edition of **outofbounds** is a result of one person’s efforts, I’d like to thank the rest of the team: Catherine Daugherty, the school’s development officer; alumni/ae co-ordinator Sara Anderson; Ryan Lindsay in marketing; administrative director Michèle Rossi; the magazine’s designer Bernard Podolski; and, of course, the many writers, who contributed their time, their vision and their words and photographs to the pages of this magazine.

I would also like to extend a personal thanks to Beth Marlin, who stepped in to help with editorial duties during the production of **outofbounds**; truly, without

Beth, **outofbounds** would still be a collection of Word documents and jpg files.

Simply put, what you see in front of you is the inanimate incarnation of TWS: Everyone pitched in to see that TWS’s alumni still had a forum – and that the school’s 40th birthday could be marked in a unique way.

And it’s with this spirit of community and celebration that I invite you to read, share and enjoy the sixth edition of **outofbounds**. 

Karen Aagaard  
[karen.aagaard@gmail.com](mailto:karen.aagaard@gmail.com)



# outofbounds

## outofbounds

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## A reduced carbon footprint for *outofbounds*

It is a great pleasure to take on the art-direction of *outofbounds*. Started 5 years ago by Katja Rudolph, this magazine has been a labour of love and a large time-consuming effort. It is a privilege to be able to add my own ideas and vision to the Toronto Waldorf School's main communication channel with its alumni/ae. I believe that the ever-expanding group of people who have experienced the unique vision of a Waldorf education, share a different way of seeing the world. By continuing to discuss and explore the subtle impacts of our Waldorf experience, I believe we can initiate thoughts and ideas that will change the world.

I hope that you are all as inspired by the compelling stories of your fellow Waldorf alumni/ae and former classmates as I am.

Echoing that big idea in a simple way, we have chosen to print this issue of *outofbounds* on 100 percent recycled paper with a printer certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). A superior alternative that I hope we all appreciate. ▣

Bernard Podolski '86  
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# Welcome to *outofbounds* 6

## Toronto Waldorf School at 40: Looking ahead

As the Toronto Waldorf School celebrates its 40th birthday, it is a privilege to welcome you to the sixth edition of *outofbounds*. We look forward to another 40 years of staying connected with our alumni and alumnae and providing future generations of TWS children with an education from a deeper perspective.



Our school has grown from its early inception with its leaky roof – which some of you will remember – to a vibrant centre for Waldorf education that is well connected throughout North America, as others have experienced. Whenever we walk through the hallway in the link, we look at the faces of our many graduates over the years, whose pictures hang on the wall. Some we recognize; many we have yet to meet.

As parents of students now in the school, we share your sense of gratitude that 40 years ago, our school was conceived by people who cared deeply about our world and the education of our children. It is unusual for a Waldorf school to be started by people who are not parents, as was the TWS. The founders of our school created an educational community in-

spired by a sense of service to other people's children. We have all been the beneficiaries.

In our leadership roles, we see our present work in the school along these lines of service to the children of the future. We hope our present work will continue to provide a firm foundation for generations of students beyond our own, and that long after we are forgotten, the school will remain a thriving centre that provides education from a deeper perspective.


Like our founders, we are concerned about the current state of the world. The challenges facing all of us as well as the generations to come are starkly clear, and will require creative minds, sensitive hearts and courageous hands to forge a new path that leads to profound solutions. Like our founders, we believe the future is calling forth a new way of educating human beings, and we believe Waldorf education is a response to this call.

In the last few years, we have made a concerted effort to reach beyond the bounds of Waldorf and enter into discussions with other educators. This is an impulse we want to develop more strongly over the next 40 years, in order to build bridges and partnerships with people within and outside of the Waldorf community who care about educating children from a deeper perspective.

It is also our intention to become more strongly "green" in our practices and to advocate building a strong and healthy relationship to nature through an experientially based curriculum. Waldorf education has been leading in this area for 90 years, and we feel we are beginning to reach a wider base of supporters for this important work. We are currently expanding our Early Childhood programs and hope someday to establish an Early Childhood Centre that will help parents give their children the healthiest start possible.

We hope to continue to build within our students a sense of their membership within the global community through our curriculum, exchange program and special trips. Every two years, a Waldorf youth conference called *Connect* is held in Domach, Switzerland to bring together Grade 12 Waldorf students from around the world, providing an experience of being connected beyond language to a profoundly human global community.

In the off years when the conference is not held, our Grade 12 class travels to another international locale for a service project. You can see a video of the most recent class's trip to Peru on YouTube. We can imagine many of you shaking your heads, thinking, "YouTube? How Waldorf has changed!" We are always changing, forever seeking to stay fresh and relevant for our students; yet at heart we remain solidly committed to the same Waldorf principles that guided our founders: Providing an educational experience that inspires our students to evolve into creative thinkers who are personally centred and strongly connected to humanity and the environment.

We hope you will be able to join us in our 40th celebrations. If not, we hope this finds you well, engaged deeply in life and full of purpose. 

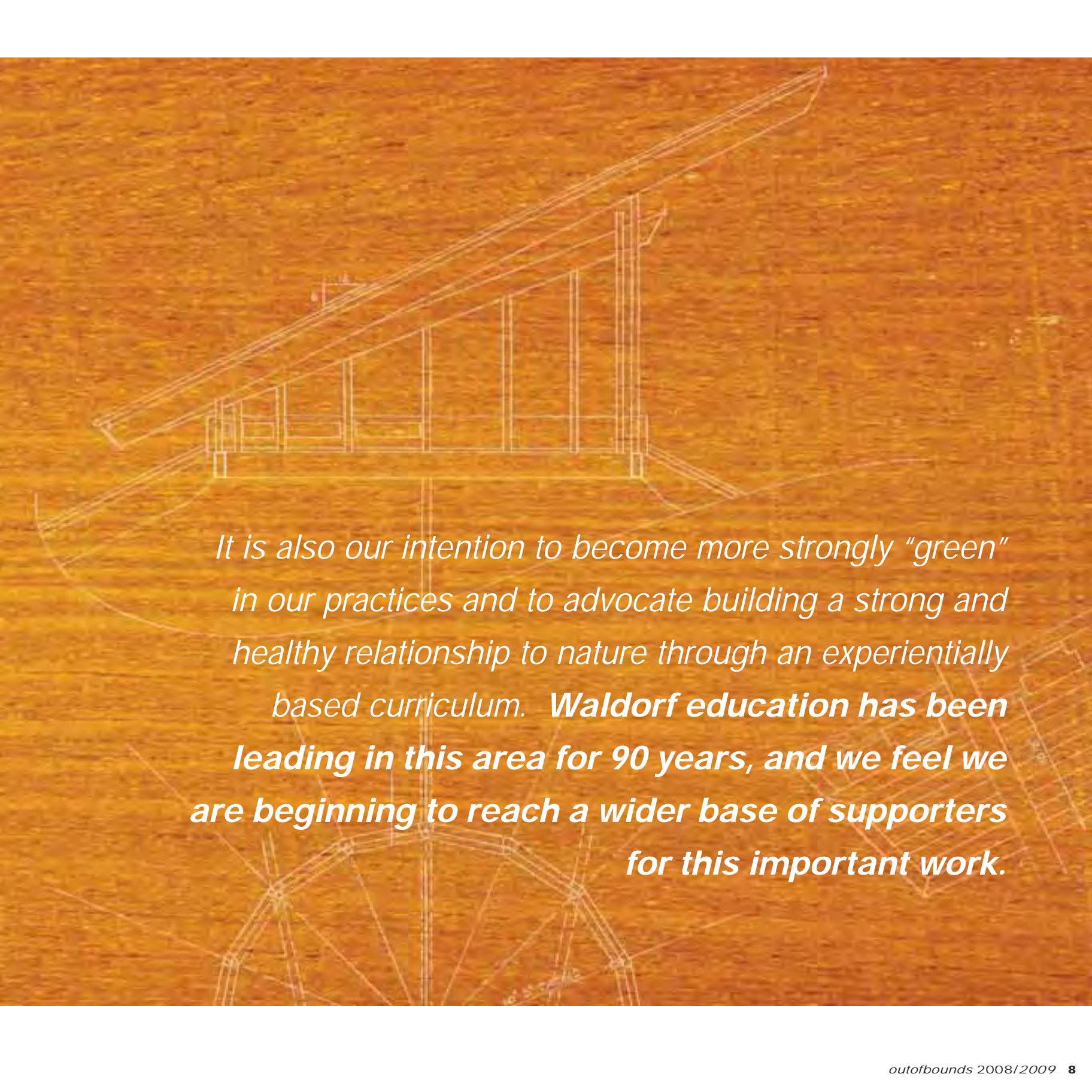
Warmly,

**Bill Harlow, Board Chair**

**Todd Royer, Faculty Chair**







*It is also our intention to become more strongly "green" in our practices and to advocate building a strong and healthy relationship to nature through an experientially based curriculum. **Waldorf education has been leading in this area for 90 years, and we feel we are beginning to reach a wider base of supporters for this important work.***



# Alumni/ae News

By Sara Anderson '85

## Forming the future

The alumni/ae program has come a long way since its humble beginnings in the early '90s. From the small group of volunteers who started the program to today's paid part-time positions, our mission has stayed true to our mandate: To build a strong alumni/ae community by staying in contact with each other and with TWS, by interacting supportively with the school, by informing the community about the alumni/ae experience and by fostering understanding of Waldorf education.

Over the next few years, our objective is to encourage more broad-based alumni/ae participation by getting in touch with all alumni/ae and by creating programming and events that appeal to us all. To this effect, we are working on a five-year plan that focuses on four main areas of initiative: strengthening communication; building rhythm and reliability into events; establishing mentorship programming; and

growing staff and volunteer resources.

## Strengthening communication

Keeping track of our diverse and widespread alumni/ae body and communicating effectively with them has been one of our biggest challenges over the years. However, with the development of the new alumni/ae database, an integral feature of the school's newly designed website, it will be much easier to streamline mass messaging, update contact information and search for fellow alumni/ae. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly possible to connect with more of you thanks to online networking tools such as Facebook.

Informing the greater community about developments in alumni/ae programming and upcoming events is also a key component of our plan. The new website will be instrumental in announcing both TWS and alumni/ae events on the new calendar, and our news pages will feature short articles on our alumni/ae and their activities.

## Building rhythm and reliability into events

Currently, the alumni/ae program has two major annual events, the Alumni/ae Market & Meeting Room and the 20-Year Reunion. They have rhythm and reliability in that they fall at prescribed times of the

year and piggyback off the Candlelight Fair and the Grade 12 Graduation, respectively.

As we grow the program, we would like to increase the number of events that have multi-generational appeal. In 2009, two events in May commemorating the school's 40th anniversary promise to have this kind of draw. Coinciding with Mayfest activities, TWS will open its doors to the public on May 1, to showcase the children's work and the school's history. A Gala event will follow on May 30 at the Richmond Hill Country Club, complete with live and silent auctions, live music by our talented alumni/ae and dancing. Alumni/ae and their parents are most warmly invited to attend!

## Establishing mentorship programming

As well as featuring the talent of our alumni/ae in performance events, we would like to increase alumni/ae participation in the Mentorship Program. Mentorship offers alumni/ae the opportunity to share their experience and expertise in meaningful ways with students and faculty, and interact supportively with the school and its community.

There are many ways to support school life. For example, alumni/ae could host a tour of their work place or employ a Grade 10 student for a co-op



# Contributors

Many hours of volunteer time have gone into the production of this magazine. Thank you to all of our contributors:



**KAREN AAGAARD '01**, who is editor of *outofbounds 6*, attended TWS from Grade 5 to OAC. Although not a "lifer," Karen still maintains that many of her happiest memories stem from the time she spent at Waldorf. After graduating from TWS, Karen moved to Halifax, where she completed a Bachelor of Journalism degree with combined honours in contemporary studies. Taking a hiatus from academe, Karen travelled with one of her university buddies, and eventually made her way back to Toronto. Hired as an (unpaid) intern at Post City Magazines, she was offered a (paid) position as assistant editor... which she took, and was later promoted to associate editor. A full-time student again (she's just started a Masters program in communication and culture at Ryerson and York Universities), Karen still freelances for a number of Toronto-based publications.



**DUNCAN W. ALDERSON** taught English and fine art at TWS from 1976 to 1988. He now lives in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he has completed a trilogy of novels and one screenplay. Duncan and his wife, Isabel Lark, have enrolled in the MFA program at Christie's, the auction house in New York City, where they will be schooled in connoisseurship and the history of modern art. Their goal is to become art dealers and help nurture emerging artists from other parts of the world.

placement. A musician might consider teaching the orchestra or choir an original composition and helping them perform it. Alumni/ae in the construction fields could lend a hand in a building project or donate supplies for it. Think of "guest lecturing" in a main lesson block or teaching a particular technique or skill in a drama, handwork or woodwork class. The possibilities are endlessly exciting!

A special example worth mentioning is the gift that was presented to the Class of 2008 at their graduation ceremony. The Class of 1988 promised to be available to the grads for questions or advice on university studies and careers areas. This gift will become an integral component of the Alumni/ae Mentorship Program via the new database.

Expanded search features will allow all registered members, now including current Grade 12 students, as well as alumni/ae, to find and contact fellow alums in particular occupational and educational areas. Please check your inbox for news and announcements in this area.

## Growing staff and volunteer resources


Clearly we are entering a new phase of development in and expansion of the alumni/ae program and it will be necessary to grow our staff and volunteer resources. Securing a contact person for every class is pivotal, and I'm very pleased to say we're getting there. We now have 70 per cent of

Class Contact positions filled, which means 20 out of 30 volunteers are in place.

We are also looking to expand the Volunteer Alumni/ae Committee, which now has five active members including the Alumni/ae Coordinator and Development Officer. The committee meets three or four times per year to brainstorm and shape the vision for the program and also helps organize the annual events. Please consider joining us.

## Moving ahead

Momentum for the alumni/ae program is building and we are connecting with more alum than ever before. Keeping in touch with you is really at the centre of it all. Please contact me right away if your information has changed, if you haven't recently received an e-message from me or if you are unable to enter the new Alumni/ae Centre.

Also, please let me know if you or an alum you know hasn't gotten a copy of *outofbounds* and I will make sure it gets mailed to you. Remember: An alumnus/a is someone who attended the school for one year or more. Don't forget to visit the new website periodically to read my updates and see what's happening. 

## Stay in touch

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# Toronto Waldorf School News

## Reflecting on 40 years past and planning for 40 years ahead. . .

**O**n the happy occasion of our 40th anniversary, we should remember that the founders of our school were forward thinking people. They paid attention to an alternative educational ethos that provides children with a rich and soulful quality of experience that helps to shape creative, connected and centred adults.

*But first of all, credit where it is due: There would be no Toronto Waldorf School, much less one celebrating a 40th anniversary, if not for the dedication and generosity of many.*

Over the years, thanks to our founders and the support of many, we've survived and thrived. We grew within our natural limits – first early childhood, and then elementary, finally followed by a high school – and as we grew, we got better. We paid attention to the important things and stayed true to our roots. We've developed new people to lead, while maintaining the core vision of the people who started us up.

But first of all, credit where it is due: There would be no Toronto Waldorf School, much less one celebrating a 40th anniversary, if not for the dedication and generosity of many. The heart of TWS grew out its connections with people – you, as former students, your parents, dedicated teachers and staff and friends. For many of us, TWS is distilled down to its best aspects: A vibrant, innovative, friendly and unique educational community. As mentioned in previous editions, we benefit tremendously from your involvement as alumni/ae

in myriad ways. Your presence on campus adds richness to our community and your networks help us build bridges that go beyond the bounds of Waldorf – something we plan to expand on as we embrace the next 40 years.

The 6th Annual 20-Year Reunion held on the weekend of June 14-16, 2008 was an excellent example of how members of our alumni/ae community not only come back to the school with open hearts and a sincere desire to reconnect, but bring gifts of your learning applied in the world – as the class of 1988 recently did with their legacy gift of mentorship to the class of 2008.

Speaking of open hearts, we joyously received an unexpected windfall last year from the late Pat Kettle, one of the

founders of TWS who became the school's initial kindergarten teacher in 1968 before returning to England a year later. Ms. Kettle's generous gift amounted to \$240,000 and is the largest monetary gift in our school's history! The board of directors will find meaningful ways to keep Ms. Kettle's legacy alive, using the current strategic plan to give some direction. We're sure some of you have fond memories of your experiences with her and will take delight in knowing about our plans once they've been decided upon.

We also joyously received an original watercolour painting of the school by prolific Edmonton artist and alumnus Christopher Lucas (formerly Podolski) from the class of '85. Consistent with his renowned style, the painting captures the architectural details of TWS, giving a true and permanent visual image in thanks to the community and school he is a part of.

We are profoundly grateful to all those who continue to help us thrive on so many levels. In case you've not had a chance to visit in a while, here are some noteworthy events from last year:

- There was a tremendous buzz about the 2008 graduating Grade 12 class play – ***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*** – a re-adaptation of Tom Stoppard's work. What made all four performances come "alive" was the fine acting of the cast, along with the minimalist set of swans, boats, swords, fiddlers, castles and medieval pageants! This play definitely helped finish off the school year with a bang, along with a strong sense of community, as most of the cast had been together since kindergarten. We are proud to welcome these fine young people as members of our growing alumni/ae community!
- The Grade 12 students enjoyed a memorable end-of-year community service/breathing out trip to Peru, where they worked with a couple of rural schools. Providing a profoundly cross-cultural experience geared toward service is one of the ways we give our students a deeper perspective on what it means to be a global citizen as they prepare to take their place in the larger world.



*Our Grade 12 students experienced what it means to be a global citizen during their community service trip to Peru.*





- Our senior athletes continued on a winning streak for their second year running. This time, they went beyond the past year's accomplishments and captured the Small school Athletic Federation (SSAF) Volleyball Team Championship and the both the senior girls' and senior boys' SSAF Basketball Team Championships. Our elementary girls' basketball and volleyball teams placed second within their respective leagues.

- The Grade 8 students performed four wonderful presentations of *Fiddler on the Roof* – another fine example of how our young students whole-heartedly embrace live performance. Their talent, enthusiasm and energy filled the forum and greatly inspired their audiences.

- A Grade 12 student was selected for Canada World Youth to help out on one of its projects. The CWY program lasts six months and usually has two phases; one in a city in Canada and the other in a small city in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe or Latin America.

- The Candlelight Fair, one of our most colourful and visible outreach and fundraising events, raised more than \$30,000 for the school's tuition adjustment program. Financially speaking, that's our most successful fair yet! Once more, we thank the alumni/ae for their participation as vendors in the alumna/e room and for helping to make the school such a welcoming place.

- Last fall, we were granted full accreditation status by the Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI) alongside the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). We are now on the seven-year accreditation cycle with both organizations and are the first Waldorf school in Canada to acquire this dual recognition.



As we reflect on recent happenings, there's also never a point when we can stop thinking about tomorrow. As we come together later this school year to celebrate our 40th birthday and our accomplishments as a school, and as individuals, through a common thread – Waldorf education – we look forward to taking the next steps in our development as we work through the actions outlined in our five-year strategic plan.

Our strategic plan, released in the fall of 2007 at our annual general meeting, is the most comprehensive forward looking plan TWS has produced to date. It is based on the input of more than 250 people from every aspect of our school community, including many of you. The plan includes six overarching areas, each comprising a distinct set of measurable objectives.

In brief, they revolve around: Our program, which includes the expansion of our early childhood de-

velopment program among many other program enhancements; our community, which includes building bridges and partnerships within the local community with people who otherwise may not know much about us but value what we bring to children; the environment, which includes improving the TWS eco-footprint and becoming more "green" with our policies and practices; our government, leadership and administration, which means strengthening and professionalizing our approach to operational and pedagogical leadership and our administrative practices to better reflect the mature phase we're in as a school; our finances, where we are ensuring we have a very thoughtful approach to our short- and long-term financial plans, with financial accessibility continuing to be a strong element of our financial picture and our facilities, which includes looking at our own facility plan and developing a master campus plan in collaboration with our sister organizations to ensure that the expansion of activities is planned for and accommodated in the larger context of us all at 9100 Bathurst St.

One of the more visible example of our efforts to date vis à vis our strategic plan is the recent launch of our new website to reflect the results of the school's extensive branding project. We are very proud of this work and we hope you will find it interesting too.

I am confident that we will, for the 40th time, rise to the aims of our founders and their successors as we continue to make our mark on the world. I feel very privileged to be getting to know many of you during these past two years and to be part of such a dynamic learning community. I whole-heartedly thank you for all your consideration and support on various levels and hope you'll join us at our 40th Anniversary Celebration in May. Please feel free to drop me an email if you'd like to assist in any way. ☺

Warmest wishes,  
Catherine Daugherty  
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# In Memoriam

Fred Gloger '79  
An urban visionary  
1960-2004

By Duncan W. Alderson



George Bernard Shaw once said: "Life is not about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." I couldn't have come up with a better epitaph for Fred Gloger, a member of Toronto Waldorf School's first graduating class, the class of '79. I had the privilege of being Fred's class adviser for three years, from Grade 10 to Grade 12. What memories do I have of him as a student? Well . . . Fred was simply a teacher's dream: Brilliant, eager to learn, a gifted writer, fond of intellectual sparring, the kind of student who often knows more than you do. He was quick to remind me of Charlemagne's importance in history, or the fact that the word "err" did not rhyme with "air."

In class activities, Fred was always game – ready for a swimming party or a camping trip in spite of an

hereditary blood disorder that often challenged him physically. In another school, I fear he might have languished. We can take pride in the fact that at Waldorf, Fred Gloger was allowed to flower. After years of excelling in academic subjects, singing in the choir and mastering the recorder, he took on the leading role in our first Grade 12 play, *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw. Suddenly the shy, skinny kid with the cramped handwriting stood in the spotlight as the embodiment of urbane, articulate Henry Higgins, a connoisseur of language and literature. We were all a bit awestruck at Fred's transformation on stage but would come to realize through the years that it wasn't just an act. By donning a red silk smoking jacket and Shaw's wit, Fred was creating the man he was to become – a well-read world traveller and urban visionary.

*'Fred was such a dedicated, selfless man, who gave enormously of his time and talent without asking or expecting much in return.'*

*- Former Premier Bob Rae*

As F. Scott Fitzgerald famously noted, there may not be any second acts in American lives, but there are in Canadian ones, and Act II in the Life of Fred Gloger was a roaring success. After studying political science at Carleton University, he became a strategist and researcher for the New Democratic Party. Few people knew more about the NDP than Fred, and he dedicated his life to promoting the party's agenda of social democracy. His co-workers claim that his contributions on Parliament Hill, in government at Queen's Park and later, in opposition, were beyond compare. His field of expertise





was housing, hydro and other municipal issues. His work on the cities agenda perhaps best reflects the integration of Fred's great loves: Art, architecture, politics, travelling, all things urban. He was an early advocate for tenants' rights and affordable housing, honing his vision for Canada's cities. Former Premier Bob Rae had this to say upon hearing of his death: "Fred was such a dedicated, selfless man, who gave enormously of his time and talent without asking or expecting much in return. He did it because he believed in the possibilities of a better world. He brought good humour and a finely crafted intelligence to his work. I shall certainly always treasure his friendship and his counsel."

I had a rare glimpse into Act II of Fred's life in the early 1990s. I was working on an assignment downtown, designing the annual report for the Pulp and Paper Centre at the University of Toronto, when I met Fred for lunch. At that point, both our lives could have been scripted by Shaw himself: Fred was living his dream of working for the NDP and exploring urban culture; I was chasing my dream of becoming a writer, living above a pizza parlor on Bloor Street (very far) West and studying the Art of Fiction at the Humber School for Writers under author Austin Clarke. Fred had come out as a gay male and was an advocate of equal rights. We met at a French restaurant and toasted our new lives with a glass of Cabernet; he then launched into a passionate monologue about Canadian politics that could have come right out of the rarely performed third act of *Man and Superman*. I waxed poetic about Mac computers and described my new career as a desktop publisher,


servicing clients and publishing a literary journal. In the 1970s, we had been teacher and student. Now meeting as equals, who found we had much in common. We both enjoyed living in downtown Toronto, where museums, theatres, libraries and concert halls were only a subway ride away. We found that we shared a love of urban environments, especially town squares, those magical intersections where the soul of a city is on brilliant display. Fred described his excitement at discovering Trafalgar Square on a trip to London, England at the tender age of 10.

That was the first of what would become an annual pilgrimage to the world's great capitals. As I listened to Fred talk that day at lunch, I could already see him forming his utopian vision of what our cities could become. I'm only sorry I didn't keep in touch and join the world traveller in one of his favourite destinations. What fun it would have been to explore cities in his company – to wander the streets of Old Havana by his side, or sit in a sidewalk café on the Piazza Navona in Rome and let Fred teach me about the Bernini sculptures in the fountain. Or be introduced to one of his favorite delicacies, *cerveau de boeuf* (cow's brain) in a candlelit restaurant on the Left Bank in Paris.

In retrospect, how fitting it was that the first Grade 12 play at TWS was *Pygmalion*, the story of the professor who turned a cockney flower girl into a lady. For isn't that what we are asked to do as Waldorf high school teachers? To take those unruly grade niners and somehow transform them over four short years into civilized human beings? "Let's

just hope they discover beauty along the way," Werner Glas used to say, my teacher at the Waldorf Institute in Detroit (who helped me design the English curriculum at TWS). For Waldorf is nothing if not a schooling in aesthetics – that whole deep dimension of art that is so missing in modern life. If Fred Gloger is any example, we are achieving our mission. For he was just the kind of human being we hope our schools will inspire students to become: A lover of beauty in every form, a Parsifal figure with a compassionate heart who fought for the rights of tenants and the poor, a visionary who wanted to make Canada's cities better places to live and work.

*Fred was simply a teacher's dream: Brilliant, eager to learn. . . the kind of student who often knows more than you do.*

Fred's spirit was always willing, but his body just couldn't keep up. He passed away in Paris, his beloved City of Light, at the age of 43, leaving the arc of his life unfinished. Who knows what kind of Act III he would have created for himself? Reformer? Author? Political candidate? Whatever form it would have taken, you can be sure it would have been pure Gloger: Generous, artful, loving and brilliant. Here's to Fred: Santé.  duncandel@hotmail.com



Photos courtesy of Anne Gloger and Duncan W. Alderson: Fred Gloger who became a well-known advocate of human rights, blossomed in his role as Henry Higgins in the TWS production of *Pygmalion* in 1979. Fred is the figure standing in the photograph at the far right.



# International News

Connect Conference 2007 Are we all part of the same picture?

By Graeme Stewart-Wilson '07



Dornach, Switzerland

The closing ceremony of the Connect Conference 2007 was held on the final day in the great lecture hall of the Goetheanum. A huge mural painted in every colour imaginable stretched above our heads, covering the entire ceiling. The figures and designs danced together and confused our eyes, making it impossible to take in more than one detail at a time. Tall pillars of stained glass ran the wall length of both sides of the hall, each window unique, in a different colour, and representing a step on the path of life which we all follow.

As the ceremony came to an end, more than 500 people filed out of the hall, one by one. As we exited the lecture hall for the last time, we shook hands and said farewell to everyone we passed before taking up our positions at the end of lines descending from the two great spiralling staircases. When this process of farewells and well-wishing came to an end, the two lines crossed each other and the process was repeated.



By the time we had all arrived downstairs in the reception hall, every individual had shaken the hand, looked in the eye, and bade farewell to every other individual. This process of acknowledgement closed the experience that we shared together and the relationships we forged. Everywhere one looked there were people crying, embracing and exchanging contact information. I will never forget the feeling of community and love that we shared with 500 almost-strangers.





## INTRODUCTION

That was how the conference ended. How it began was a very different story. The different classes arrived at the Goetheanum property in the small town of Dornach, Switzerland on a sunny Sunday afternoon. For the majority of the students, this was the first time we had seen the Goetheanum building, rising like an organic continuation of the hill it sits upon, obscured by trees and green fields as one winds one's way up the hill.

As we crowded into the reception hall to register, each class stuck together, comfortable with the people they knew. The boys stole glances at the

*I will never forget the feeling of community and love that we shared with 500 almost-strangers*

girls and vice versa. Each participant was given a small cloth bag containing important supplies for the week.

After the first day, the conference began to take on a specific rhythm. A communal breakfast in the morning was followed by a 60-minute lecture in the Goetheanum hall. After the lecture, we broke up into smaller discussion groups. Although the discussions usually began with the themes introduced in the lecture, the conversation often veered off to wherever the group members' interests lay. The dis-

cussion groups were followed by free time, when we would meet other participants, and then lunch. In the afternoon, participants separated into workshop groups with topics ranging from art and dance to anthroposophy and philosophy; from social activism to maintenance and game playing.

For those who don't know, the Connect Conference is a bi-annual meeting of Grade 12 Waldorf students held at the famous Goetheanum building in Dornach, Switzerland. 2007 saw the third Connect Conference, which was attended by Toronto Waldorf School's Grade 12 class, along with 500 students from other Waldorf schools around the world.

The organizers tried to have a class from every continent represented at the conference — we were truly an international group! The theme focused on the effects of globalization, human connection in an era of globalization, and how we as individuals influence the world around us; all important topics for students preparing to leave high school and enter the wider world. The official theme was stated as the question: "Are we all part of the same picture?" It can be difficult to understand and feel the connections and influence we share with people from other areas of the world, and the lectures and workshops strove to highlight this. Through understanding these issues, each individual can achieve a global consciousness, which may then lead to global responsibility.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The conference was one of the most exciting and inspiring weeks I have experienced. It was incredible to take part in the great energy and creative explosion that takes place when you bring 500 Waldorf students together. Everywhere I looked there were soccer and volleyball games, dancing, singing and circus activities spontaneously springing up.

We brought a fierce if short-lived energy and love for life to the somewhat sleepy town of Dornach, the likes of which will not be seen again until the next conference. It was inspiring to see the large number

of young people who are not only concerned for the world we live in, but hold the strong belief that by devoting at least a portion of their lives to acting and thinking constructively, solutions to our problems can be developed. There is a strong creative force and beauty that comes from the un-jaded view of youth, something we must strive to protect.

Most participants came with an ingrained understanding and perspective that material wealth is only a small aspect of leading a happy and fulfilling life; personal connections like those formed at the conference, the expression and sharing of creative energy and contributing to make the world a better place are just as important.

There was an unmistakably organic feel to the conference, which spoke to the location where it was held. While there were scheduled lectures, workshops and other activities, attendance was optional, no rules were enforced, and most of our time was given over to free initiative. It is a testament to the creativity and relative maturity of the participants that everything turned out so well; that every moment was packed with memorable experiences.







## LOOKING BACK

Although Waldorf education was inspired by the teachings of Rudolph Steiner, he also stressed that anthroposophy should not be a part of the education, lest it become dogma and affect the freedom of the individual.

Looking back with the wisdom gained in a year of post-high-school learning, I can see that the conference was an invitation to take a deeper look at the teachings behind our education. Although my entire life has been based on the Waldorf pedagogy, the conference gave me the initiative and insight to begin to explore the value of anthroposophy on my own. While the relationships and connections forged between conference participants may have faded over the past year, we were all privileged to share a brief glimpse into a world where connection between human beings is of the highest value. I was inspired to individually look into the issues that speak to me.


*We were all privileged to share a brief glimpse into a world where connection between human beings is of the highest value*



## CONCLUSION

The conference ended in April 2007 and we all returned to our respective countries, schools and lives. After a few weeks, all that remained of the experience were memories and the "Connect Cough," a brutal cold born of too much beer, late nights and personal connection.

Although many of us remained in touch, after a time the inspiration and energy of the conference began to fade. We got on with our lives. However, I know that although buried, the connections still exist, and it makes me smile every time I hear of one of my former classmates meeting up with or talking to someone from the conference.

Most of us have finished high school now, and have gone on to study, work or travel. I have been travelling in South America for the past year, working with a non-governmental organization called Aramitan in Sao Paulo, Brazil. While there, I met people who knew students who had attended the conference. It made me realize how connected all the people of the world really are. 

Graeme Stewart-Wilson '07




## POSTSCRIPT

### SAO PAULO, BRAZIL, JUNE 2008

As I sit on the balcony of the Aramitan house, I can see the whole of the property stretched before me. On one side is the garage we have transformed into a living and dining room, on the other is a gently sloping grassy field that will one day become an out-of-doors classroom. Further down, an organic garden and cultivated fruit trees give way to a tropical forest that rises and falls in a green wave as far as the eye can see. Beyond the forest, the metal roofs and towers of the city shimmer in the heat. To my right, over the roof of the house, I can see the slum reaching up the hill; children running, playing and flying kites in the street. At the top of the hill, an auto junkyard twinkles metallically in the sun.

There is a group of people laughing and telling stories below, someone is yelling for help mixing concrete from the front of the house, others are digging a trench for the water system, sweating and silent but for the clink of shovels on gravel. Beside me, another team plasters concrete on a new wall, laughing as it falls all over them.

Out of the house drifts the sounds of walls being destroyed and built, of ideas being exchanged, of languages being learned, of laughter, of people living together in a community, and of a dream being built, brick by brick. I realize that I never really left the conference, that for me, it was just the beginning of a journey — of having the independence to learn about the things that interest me, a recognition of the importance of human connection, an appreciation of the creative energy that can come from living in a community and hope for a better world. 



# Greetings from other Waldorf schools



## Trillium Waldorf School Guelph, Ontario

By Karyn Kirkwood, administrator

**T**he Trillium Waldorf School opened its doors in the fall of 1996 and, like every young, developing Waldorf school, it is due to the inspiration, determination and fortitude of the many parents and faculty who have travelled along our developmental path that we are thriving today.

Trillium has settled into our new dedicated home with a beautifully designed building, which garners much admiration from the community. Our grounds have been transformed from a bare landscape three years ago to the beginnings of a forested wonderland of natural play structures and gardens. Our enrollment has steadily increased and we have surpassed 100 Kindergarten and grade school students this year. Our parent and child programs expanded to five days a week, with more than 30 new families joining our community.

We are blessed with exceptional teaching and administrative staff, an inspired and dedicated board of directors, and most important, a supportive, car-

ing, and committed parent body. The inspiration, determination, and fortitude of our early years continue to drive us forward along our path of development to becoming a full member school of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.

Throughout our history, we have turned to our fellow Waldorf schools for support and guidance, and we are deeply grateful to the Toronto Waldorf School for providing such valuable mentorship over the years.

We wish an abundance of blessings for the Toronto Waldorf School as they celebrate their 40th anniversary, and look forward to watching with admiration their continued development. ■

## Mulberry School Kingston, Ontario

By Peelu Hira, administrator

**M**ulberry School is thrilled to congratulate the Toronto Waldorf School on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. You were pioneers who worked hard to establish Waldorf education in Ontario and are now exemplars for those of us who have followed. Forty years ago, Waldorf education was virtually unknown in southern Ontario and so the success of the school is a testament of the dedication of the founders of

the school, the many faculty, staff and board members over the years, and all the families who have taken the leap and enrolled their children in a wonderfully rich and holistic curriculum.

Mulberry School is a developing Waldorf school in Kingston, Ontario that offers parent and child groups, Morning Garden, Kindergarten and Grades 1 to through 8. We graduated our first Grade 8 class last year.

On this happy occasion, we offer our admiration and best wishes for the future! ■

Mulberry School is an independent, non-denominational developing Waldorf School within the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and a charitable and not-for-profit organization. We offer Parent and Child programs, Morning Garden, Kindergarten and Grades 1-8. Mulberry School welcomes children and their families from all religious, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds.

Mulberry School  
25 Markland Street, Kingston, Ontario  
613-542-0669 - mulberryschool.net







# Alumni/ae Feature Class of '80 Anne Gloger

By Ashley Taylor '01

Anne Gloger is familiar with the role of “pioneer.” As one of Toronto Waldorf School’s first students, she remembers kindergarten in the basement of the Lillian Street church in Willowdale and the move to the freshly-minted halls of 9100 Bathurst Street in Grade 5 in 1968. She describes the subsequent years as a building process, quite literally: “I remember the first term we pretty much majored in construction. . .

“I remember having lessons in our winter coats and being adjourned from classes to go move bricks.”



It's no surprise, then, that Anne's self-described occupation – life passion, it seems – is “community building.” After graduating from high school and satisfying her travel bug, Anne earned her early childhood education diploma from Centennial College. She then worked in several daycares and nurseries and eventually began managing school-age programs and engaging in partnership development between schools and churches, recreation programs and interested individuals. She received a degree in social development studies from the University of Waterloo and finally a post-degree diploma in business administration. Currently, Anne is the manager and founding member of Storefront, a community-based centre established in 2001 in the designated “priority neighbourhood” of East Scarborough.

In the late 1990s, this high-density, low-income housing neighbourhood faced an acute shortage of accessible social programs and services, coupled with an influx of new refugees and an overburdened shelter system. Because the area was receiving very little government support, the 40 city agencies mandated to serve that area united to bring service to the community, recognizing a need for increased accessibility. This multi-agency group then hired Anne, who helped to develop the Storefront model.

“The Storefront provides space, support, outreach, resources, all kinds of things that allow agencies from across the city to come in and bring their expertise and their services to this community,” Anne says. She describes a centre that, in the years following its inception, faced many funding hurdles and

resolutions, a broadening and deepening of community support and, eventually, the emergence of Storefront as “a symbol of renewal.” Anne is quick to point out that the establishment of Storefront precedes the City of Toronto's Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy designation of East Scarborough as a priority neighbourhood: “It was recognized by people on the ground, it was not done because there was a funding incentive to do it. It was done

build it.” There are other parallels in Anne's experience with Storefront and her days as a Waldorf “pioneer.” Yes, it's true that in both places she helped lay bricks and literally put in place the foundation, but there is also a repeated experience of dealing with change. “It's possible that Waldorf taught me how to learn to deal with transition, to carry on, because that's exactly how Storefront has operated.” Being a pioneer – dealing with transition – is not easy and Anne knows this first hand. As she describes her experience in one of the first classes of Waldorf's nascent high school program, it sounds

*As one of TWS's first students, Anne Gloger remembers the move from a church basement to the new school at 9100 Bathurst Street in 1968, when she was in Grade 5.*

because people wanted to work together.”

Anne calls herself a facilitator and it is clear from a short visit to Storefront that she is very hands-on. She remembers learning this direct approach from her Grades 5 to 8 Waldorf class teacher, Renate Kurth: “Something would come up and it was always like, ‘Well, let's try this, let's check it out . . . Let's go outside and see if we can



Anne is the manager and founding member of Storefront, a community-based centre launched in 2001 in a high density, low income neighbourhood in East Scarborough. In 2007, Anne received the William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations from the City of Toronto, following her nomination by a Tamil seniors' club.



*It was the concept of Waldorf, she says, more so than the individual people or community that influenced her*

like the students were not the only ones experiencing growing pains. "They were doing a lot of things by trial and error, trying to figure out how to do it," she says. No holding hands in the playground, no blue jeans, talk of uniforms . . . "They were just making it up!" she says, laughing. And then, more seriously, "We went through a lot of the struggle."

Storefront is also in its early years, but there is no evidence of a struggle here. It is a vibrant, active place with members of different ages, ethnicities and abilities. Storefront offers individuals a space to drop in, secure counsel and advice, engage in recreation and meet new people and obtain the services of about 40 partner agencies. "One of my successes here," Anne says, "is figuring out different ways and means for people to work together and make things happen."

In 2007, Anne received the William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations from the City of Toronto. Fittingly, she was nominated for the award by one of Storefront's main groups, Vasantham, a Tamil seniors' club that uses the centre for yoga, sewing, health lectures and general discussions. The centre, she says, "has represented really the first place that welcomed and befriended them in the community and they are part of the fabric of Storefront." Vasantham's nomination of Anne for the human rights award for race relations is fitting, then, as the group's members see Storefront as more than a space provider but also as a means by which they engage with and are celebrated within the broader community.



Anne Gloger attributes many of her early life experiences to her later passion for community building.



Anne Gloger during the early days of Storefront.



*'It's possible that Waldorf taught me how to learn to deal with transition, to carry on, because that's exactly how Storefront has operated.'*

The award was granted to Anne in recognition of "creating this space in a priority neighbourhood where all people of all backgrounds are welcome and celebrated." Anne's humility is obvious, even as she concedes, "It surprised me how important it was."

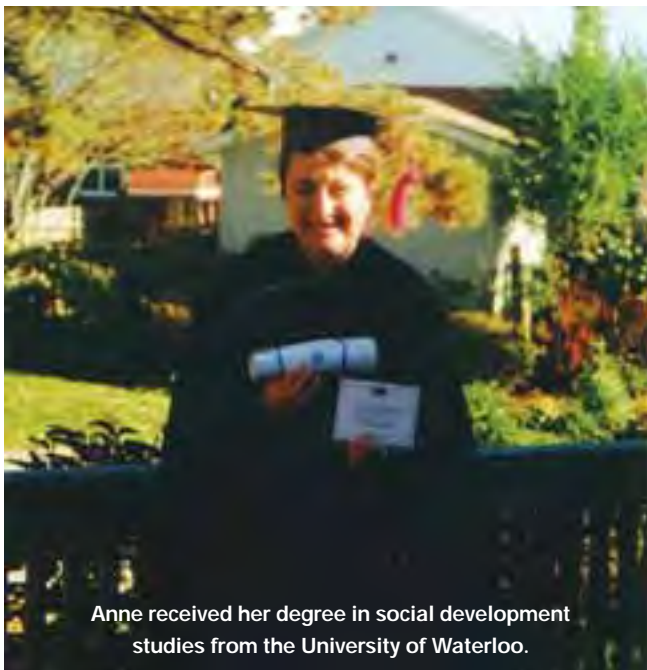
It's a slow day in the centre, Anne says, but you'd never know it. A quick tour of the building reveals a group of youth artists, energetically at work on a

mural to be mounted on the outside walls of the building, formerly a police station. There is also a community garden, a produce and open market each Thursday that invites the community to experience live entertainment, card games and barbecued fare, and an employment resource centre, as well as many rooms open to use by community organizations, including youth groups, mental health support groups and seniors groups. Anne has her finger on the pulse of the centre and is clearly familiar with all of its projects, not to mention its visitors and participants. The interview is interrupted briefly as she waves good-bye to two women from Community Living, one of the many groups that use the centre's facilities each week.

"What is really exciting," Anne says, "is the power of community, the power of working together." Well, community is definitely a Wally buzz word, and I'm eager to know if she sees a connection. It was the concept of Waldorf, she says, more so than the individual people or community that influenced her: "The concept of not being in such a hurry, not being in the commercial world, working together." She laughs and with a nostalgic air says, "One of the most profound things I remember was when we went out in the spring and planted wheat and in the fall we harvested it and ground it and made the worst bread I've ever tasted. . . it was a really profound experience, that whole natural cycle, the doing it ourselves experience that gave me an appreciation for process, and certainly for nature."

Doing it ourselves indeed; Anne Gloger is truly a model of that philosophy. ■

Ashley Taylor '01  
ashleysamanthataylor@gmail.com



Anne received her degree in social development studies from the University of Waterloo.

## SARA ANDERSON

'85 has been involved in the Alumni/ae Association from its early years. With the Development Officer and Alumni/ae Volunteer Committee,



she is working to strengthen the relationship between alumni/ae and TWS, expand the alumni/ae network and develop new initiatives for the program. She organizes and hosts several annual events including the Alumni/ae Vendor and Meeting Room at the Candlelight Fair and the 20-Year Alumni/ae Reunion. Sara has three children who attend Alan Howard Waldorf School in downtown Toronto. She works as an English language and communication specialist in the corporate sector. She holds a B.A. in Linguistics from McGill University, a B.Ed. from the University of Toronto and an M.Ed. in Second Language Education from OISE, U of T.



**JEFFREY CHENG '01** attended TWS from Grades 2 through 12. He studied urban planning before switching to architecture at the University of Waterloo. A student of architecture, he is working as a designer and plans to begin his Masters degree in architecture and urban design in May 2009. He has been fortunate to work in several energetic local architectural firms as Toronto underwent its cultural revival. He has also worked as a designer in New York, and enjoyed study terms in Stuttgart and Rome. Jeffrey is now leading two projects for a Chinese firm, Atelier Zhanglei, in Nanjing, China.



# Class of '87: Brett Smith

By Emma Cook '99

When I was asked to write about Toronto Waldorf School alumnus Brett Smith '87, I thought: "Why not?" After all, Brett and I have music careers, philosophy and a Waldorf education in common. I can say that it has been a real pleasure delving into someone else's life for a change (especially for someone who's trying to make a career out of her own music), and profiling a fellow musician.

One of the most common misconceptions of the Waldorf education is that it is too heavily weighted towards the creative, or "artsy" side and not enough to the scientific. I remember when my parents enrolled my siblings and I; my aunt told my dad to be careful because we might not "fit in." Upon first inspection of Brett Smith's life thus far, I thought to myself: Great, a philosophy major and musician – way to break through the Waldorf stereotype! But like most conclusions jumped to too quickly, mine was dissolved once I dug a little deeper. How about adding project manager for a Toronto-based IT company, Binesh Learning Solutions, to the mix, or, co-founder and owner of an English-as-a-second-language school, Global Awareness Through English Enterprises, which operated from 1997 to 2005 in Guelph, Ontario, where he now lives with his family.

Indeed, Brett is a lover of karate, the arts, a believer in science, a spiritual man devoted to the Bahá'í faith, a husband, father, singer/songwriter, project manager, world traveler... among other things. I suppose the thing that strikes me most about Brett is not how multifaceted he is, although that is something to marvel at, but how content he seems doing the various things he does. There is a sense with him that he is truly happy with the trajectory his life has taken so far, and looks forward to what is still to come.

*'There was always something slightly magical about Waldorf, a real celebration of life, music and art, which I think is very important...'*

Born in November, 1968, Brett Smith came to Waldorf in nursery school and stayed until Grade 9. He remembers his time there fondly. When I asked him to sum up his general sense of the Waldorf education, he said, "There was always something slightly magical about Waldorf, a real celebration of life,



Top to bottom, left to right: Brett Smith in kindergarten at Toronto Waldorf School. ('I am sitting on the floor in the middle with my hand over my mouth'); Brett Smith more recently; Brett with his sons, Asher, 7; Eli, 5; and Tristan, 3; Brett Smith has been married to Maureen O'Neill since 1995. They live in Guelph, Ontario with their three sons, ages 3, 5 and 7; Brett Smith, right, with fellow classmate Tom Lee at the Class of '88's 20th reunion last year.



music and art, which I think is very important..." After TWS, Brett continued his high school education at Crescent, a private boys school, then went on to complete a Bachelor's degree in philosophy at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. After Trent, Brett did a year of French immersion before completing his Masters of Philosophy at Laval University in Quebec City, Quebec, in 1994. I guess what we're all dying to know is, what part did Waldorf play in Brett's choice to study Philosophy? Let's assume that it's impossible to pinpoint any one thing that defines what path one will

*'Waldorf played a key role in cultivating in me the importance of questioning. . .'*

choose in life. Having said that, in Brett's words, "Waldorf played a key role in cultivating in me the importance of questioning – life, purpose, reality etc. – this curiosity and quest for knowledge was realized in university through my study of philosophy." Although Brett was born into a Bahá'í family, he really took it upon himself to study its teachings and

come to his own realizations of the truth. For those who don't know, the Bahá'í faith teaches that we are all part of one "human" family, that we must overcome all forms of prejudice and work for unity as one nation of humanity. Bahá'ís believe that science and religion are in harmony and it is necessary for people to investigate the truth for themselves, without relying solely on our preconceptions from other religions, our parents or forefathers. I asked Brett if he saw similarities between anthroposophy (a philosophy based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, which holds that with self-discipline, cognitional experience of the spiritual

Smith & Dragoman in concert.



Cover art from OPEN THE GATES, Smith & Dragoman's first album.






world can be attained), and Bahá'í. He jokingly admitted his ignorance of anthroposophy, which immediately put a smile on my face... I mean, how many of us actually know how to pronounce it, let alone have any clue as to what it really means? Yeah, that's what I thought! I spent 14 years of my life at Waldorf and only have a cursory understanding which I probably couldn't explain to an "outsider," even if I tried. Although neither Brett nor I could put our finger on it, it seems that the ideas permeated somehow. Brett muses, "It does seem

*Since then, Smith & Dragoman have recorded two full-length albums of original music, have released a live concert DVD and have performed all over Canada and the United States.*

that both anthroposophy and the Bahá'í faith place a lot of value on the spiritual side of our nature and the development of our souls in this world" Sounds about right to me, but go ahead and send a letter to the editor if you have something to add.

Brett picked up the guitar at 22 years of age. This was something I was surprised to learn because if you listen to the music he writes and performs, you would think he has been playing forever. Brett got together with fellow musician Michael Dragoman and began playing music in the late 1990s. Since then, Smith & Dragoman have recorded two full-length albums of original music, have released a live concert DVD and have performed all over Canada and the United States. I'm listening to "Rumi's Song" from their first album ***Open the Gates*** as I write this and can only describe the music as hauntingly beautiful. The way only a song can be when the lyrics, instruments and voice are all weaving the same tapestry. Although hard to categorize, their music seems to have evolved into a folky type of world music, with poetically lyrical stories.

I asked Brett if he could have imagined where his life would be right now back when he was in high school and he told me he was never one to set out specific plans but more to live in the moment and see where life took him. He spent time working in Bolivia, volunteering in South America on socio-economic development projects, and running an ESL School. He did say that he always saw himself happily married and with children, which is one dream that has come true. Brett has been happily married to Maureen O'Neill since 1995 and they live in Guelph, Ontario with their three boys, Asher, 7; Eli, 5; and Tristan, 3.

Having recently landed a project management job at Research in Motion, the maker of the ubiquitous BlackBerry wireless email device, where does Brett see himself in 10 years? Well, he would like to continue working as a project manager for RIM, be continually striving to make the world a better place for all humanity and have recorded a few more albums... what else! 

Emma Cook '99  
emma@emmacookmusic.com



# Class of '88: Laurens Wit

## Building on a Waldorf foundation

By Nils Junge '88

Laurens Wit, true son of Waldorf (parents Niek and Jop were teachers) attended Toronto Waldorf School from the second grade through Grade 12. After ninth grade, when his motivation for schoolwork flagged, he took a sabbatical to work on a farm. Because he sure wasn't going to get any course credits for that, he had to join the class below his original year upon his return. To our good fortune, that class was ours. I'd always known Laurens as the little guy in the class above us, but when he joined us in 10th grade he'd shot up to about 6 foot 3 and he was a commanding presence. Laurens had no trouble fitting in, stirring things up and generally preventing the rest of us from taking ourselves too seriously.

Time off did not turn Laurens into a star pupil. In fact, it is a point of pride with him that he ended up receiving the lowest grades in the class. One could say he had deep anti-scholarly convictions. Laurens applied himself at school all right, just not to the academic bits. Instead, his energy went into extracurricular projects. These included, with or without the collusion of others: causing months of disarray by switching the locks on all the high

school lockers (using a list of combinations nicked from the faculty room); setting a pentagram-shaped fire on the classroom floor one morning; taking an Ontario Parks tractor for a joyride in Algonquin Park —

*Instead, his energy went into extracurricular projects.... [including] almost selling off the school by placing an ad in the Toronto Star*

Duly recorded on videotape, for which the alert park rangers were grateful (they did not press charges); almost selling off the school by placing an ad in the Toronto Star; not to mention a series of scatological stunts better left unreported. But Laurens had talents aside from playing practical jokes: He brewed a mean beer; played bass in our class

band, the Garage Door Openers; and was a natural on the stage. Somewhere out there — not yet on YouTube — is a video from a class outing that captures Laurens' offhand, sardonic wit at full throttle. For our 12th grade graduation ceremony, Laurens, always good with his hands, sewed his own tie-dyed tuxedo. Not giving a rodent's butt about academics can be liberating, and he infected a lot of us with his particular brand of joie de vivre.

While the rest of us may have studied or slacked off, it is safe to say that few gave much thought to our post-high school careers. Laurens, however, knew early on what direction he was heading in — farming. He recalls that his class teacher through fourth grade, Charlotte Chambers, had come to teaching from farming. Once she impressed young Laurens by breaking up a schoolyard fight; a fight a male teacher wasn't able to handle. In any case, "Farmer Boy" Laurens spent many summers working on the Koekebakkers' farm, and his year off on Michael Schmidt's biodynamic farm in Durham, Ontario.



After completing 12th grade, a memorable year for all of us, he prepared to go off to Germany to be a lehrling (apprentice) with a farmer in Bavaria. It didn't cause any delays, but I vividly remember how the summer before he left, he almost burned his face off while lighting the St. John's bonfire. For a few weeks, his face was scary, a glazed mask of second-degree burns. I thought it was pretty cool and couldn't understand why he didn't want to go into town to freak out the public.

Then lightning struck, literally. The barn burned to the ground and, instead of learning to farm in Bavaria, Laurens spent the year helping them build a new one, a huge structure designed to last several centuries. Every morning he was up at 5 a.m., with one day off every two weeks as his only chance to rest. The experience (not the work hours) helped push him into construction as a vocation. Instead of becoming a farmer, he would be a builder. When he returned from Germany, his parents had bought a farm and he set about rebuilding their barn with his good friend and classmate Lucas Sorbara. "At that point, I thought I knew everything about construction," he laughs. "Boy, was I wrong!"

Fate apparently decided Laurens was tough enough to handle a few more whacks, like cancer, at age 21. Diagnosed with "cancer of the nut" as he delicately puts it, he went under the scalpel. This did not stop him, two weeks later, from riding the roller coasters at Canada's Wonderland with Tamara Sutton, faithful girlfriend who'd stuck by his side throughout the ordeal. Folks, this is not a recommended post-operation activity! Subsequent tests showed that the cancer was still lurking and had spread to the lymph nodes. More operations were scheduled, and several rounds of chemotherapy. But not before he cut down 100 cedars and 20 hemlocks on his parents' property, in the midst of winter in three feet of snow. This time he was on the operating table for 14 hours, at the mercy of three different teams led by world-renowned surgeons Drs. Jewitt and Darling. They sawed open his sternum lengthwise and removed a tumor the size of a Nerf football before wiring him back together and leaving behind a couple of hundred stitches. Laurens's contribution to science was the largest lymph tumour ever removed at the time. The operation became the subject of medical seminars.

After getting cut up and dosed three times with chemotherapy, it took his limp and broken body, down to just 150 lbs, months to recover. (Toronto Waldorf School teachers Helga Rudolph and Duncan Alderson took up a collection so he could be helped with alternative medicines.) Death was standing by, but he says he felt somehow indestructible; like a champ, he just kept getting back up. Still, he reports the ordeal, facing his limitations, was good for his ego. As a souvenir, he now sports a long scar stretching from his ear to below his navel. He may tell you it comes from a



*Then lightning struck, literally. The barn burned to the ground and, instead of learning to farm in Bavaria, Laurens spent the year helping them build a new one*



close encounter with a black bear in Algonquin Park, which, frankly, is as plausible as what really happened. He has recovered, but still needs to have operations from time to time to remove – knock on wood – benign tumours.

Listening to Laurens tell his story you sometimes have to wonder whether, just maybe, he absorbed a little too much of the mythology they fed us at Waldorf. The pranks, the lightning, the fire, the heroics, the ravaged body stretched out and bleeding – remember those gods of yore, Loki, Thor, Hercules, Prometheus?



**Laurens's contribution to science was the largest lymph tumor ever removed at the time. The operation became the subject of medical seminars.**

Back on earth, Laurens runs his own business, Laurens Wit Construction, based in Owen Sound, Ontario, where he lives. He has five full-time employees and they build two or three houses a year, as well as doing major renovations. His company's specialty is solid, beautiful and highly energy-efficient houses. The secret is insulating the heck out of the house, which means double stud walls with lots of insulation, or using ICF (insulated concrete forms). The finished product isn't cheap, but the heating bills don't make you sweat, either. He built his own home, a stone house, which he suspects has the lowest heat-loss calculation in Grey and Bruce counties, with heating costs of \$600 per year (which covers hot water and everything). He has a simple, yet highly effective, business plan. After every job, he and his workers discuss what they could have done better. They don't beat themselves up over mistakes – just coolly analyze where they could have improved, and then apply those lessons the next time around. In this way

the quality of their work gets better and better. Laurens is also the past-president of the Grey-Bruce Homebuilders and Trades Association.

Laurens met Renée, a local beauty from Owen Sound, in 1993. He invited her to a slideshow of his exploits from a cross-continental road trip that took him to Mexico and back. She decided she could handle what she saw and a year later they were married. They now have two children, Jackson, age 8, and Nelle, age 6, as well as one dog and 10 chickens. They spend summers at a cottage on Whitecloud Island on Georgian Bay. Having held down the fort until now, Renée plans to become a teacher.

Until this year, their wedding was the last time I saw Laurens. We reconnected at our 20-year class reunion in June; caught up on old times. Fourteen years is way too long to lose touch, but you get sidetracked sometimes. Anyway, we picked up right where we left off last century. From the perspective of an old classmate, I couldn't see a huge difference – sure, he's more mature, but shouldn't we all be after 20 years? Luckily this hasn't put a damper on his sense of humour. He's a bit beefier than I remember him, but strong as an ox.

It turns out that no one is going to sell you life insurance if you had cancer at age 21, which is a bit of a nuisance if you have a wife, two kids and 10 chickens. So Laurens, practical as always, has gone into real estate. As part of a retirement plan, he and Renée bought an apartment building with eight units, which they rent out, and plan to invest in more. "It's good to think outside of the box. Waldorf helped me to think creatively," he says. With that bit of wisdom, he puts on his motorcycle helmet, mounts his bike and roars off into the night, on the long road north to Owen Sound. Monday's a working day and the foundations for another house need to be poured.

*Nils Junge '88  
nilscjunge@yahoo.com*



**EMMA COOK '99** says she thought "why not?" when asked to write a piece on TWS alumni Brett Smith. "After all, Brett and I have music careers, philosophy and a Waldorf education in common. I can say that it has been a real pleasure delving into someone else's life for a change, and profiling a fellow musician." Since the release of her debut album **Manifesto**, Emma has been rapidly garnering attention on the folk rock scene in Toronto and throughout Southern Ontario. Her website is at [www.emmacookmusic.com](http://www.emmacookmusic.com).

**CATHERINE DAUGHTERY**



was the Director of Administration for nine years at Trillium Waldorf School, a developing school in Guelph, Ontario, and has been at TWS as Development Officer since January 2007. She completed the Waldorf Collaborative Leadership Program at the Rudolf Steiner Centre in conjunction with Antioch University in the spring of 2006. Catherine completed two years of a B.A. at the University of Guelph. Her earlier work experience includes nine years in junior management roles in the private sector, mainly in IT and marketing. She enjoys hiking, cross-country skiing and slow food cooking.



# Class of '90: Patrick McWhinney

## Building bridges around the world



By Anna Purcell '91

A couple of months ago, I was wandering aimlessly around a cabin in some wet woods on the West Coast. I was waiting for a phone call from Boston, Massachusetts. I looked out the window. Through the trees I could see the ancient orchard in the ravine below, and, further in the distance, glimpse the sparkling ocean through cedar and arbutus boughs. There were hummingbirds. The phone rang, and there was Pat.

Patrick McWhinney had been one grade above me at Toronto Waldorf School. We didn't really know each other, even though we often stood among the same gaggle of kids at the top of the hill after school, and even though he briefly dated my best friend. I was a pretty self-contained gal – I waited for other people to come and get to know me, I didn't know how to do it the other way around. He seemed interesting, standing over there, though. Bright, articulate, self-assured, discerning. A little cocky. Maybe, forgive me, a bit of a snob.

Before our chat, I had poked around the website for the company, Insight Partners, at [www.insightpartnersonline.com](http://www.insightpartnersonline.com), that he co-founded in 2002. My first impression was one of status and business-like confidence. I noticed mention of Harvard graduates and Fortune 500 companies and felt the familiar frustration that comes from my affection for excellence clashing head-on with my irritation with the usually accepted markers of it. (I dislike a world where going to Harvard is often irrelevantly impressive.)

Almost 20 years later, Pat's familiar voice had become infused with a warmth I didn't remember it having, an openness and intelligent, responsive enthusiasm. It was a pleasure speaking with him and he's up to some cool stuff, let me tell you.

After graduating in 1990 from TWS, he did some travelling and went to McGill University, where he earned a B.A. in religious studies and philosophy (with, he thinks, a minor in German and Japanese.) Offered a scholarship to do his Master's degree at Harvard, he enrolled in that school's theological studies program and busily set about designing his own degree. He spent most of his time at Harvard's famous law and business schools, and working with The Harvard Negotiation Project – the brainchild of Roger Fischer, co-author of ***Getting to Yes***, a seminal work in the field of mediation.

With an understanding of law, finance and three years of skills training in mediation, he founded Insight Partners with Harvard schoolmate David Seibel in 2002. Insight Partners is in the business of

*Almost 20 years later, Pat's familiar voice had become infused with a warmth I didn't remember it having, an openness and intelligent, responsive enthusiasm. It was a pleasure speaking with him and he's up to some cool stuff, let me tell you.*



conflict management. Working with Fortune 500 companies to strengthen relationships and create value as they go through their various transitions is just one aspect of what Insight Partners does. They also offer in-house training in conflict resolution and effective communication; teach courses in negotiation and mediation at Harvard Law School; and coach executives on how to navigate difficult situations.


Interestingly, Pat also founded Insight Collaborative, Insight Partners' non-profit sister company. Insight Collaborative provides all the same negotiation, facilitation and mediation services as Insight Partners to non-profit organizations and underserved sectors of the world. Through Insight Collaborative, Pat travels the globe and does amazing things like ad-

*Through **Insight Collaborative**, Pat travels the globe and does amazing things like advising the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. . .*

vising the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague on how to manage crucial international relationships or helping Iraq's fledgling government learn the negotiation skills it needs to stand on its own. Another wonderful element of Insight Collaborative is its fellowship program in which accepted participants are given one year, \$25,000 and three international placements, after three months of training at the Collaborative's office in Boston, to contribute to the field of conflict management, the world and their own self-development. Among the criteria for acceptance into Insight Collaborative's fellowship program is the "development of a compassionate disposition towards the world."

When I asked our dear editor, Karen Aagaard, if she had a theme in mind for this year's issue of **outofbounds**, she said it was "looking forward," in keeping with the school's 40 anniversary. I thought of spanning time and distances. How do we get from where we are to where we want to be? How do we get around our obstacles? In the woods, in relationships, in our careers? I thought of bridges – bridging space, time, water, turbulence, anger, fear, varying interests, differing values, diverging cultures and habits.

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote that what is great in man is that he is a bridge, and not a goal. It's exciting that Pat has the privilege to witness so many relationships at that pivotal moment when everything could either be ruined or transformed into something far greater. And it's exciting that he seems to know what to do with that moment. That he can connect individuals, nations and companies to what they really want and a more valuable future, in all senses of the word "valuable." But what really gave me pause was how he seems to have spanned the distance from his wish for himself to his wish for the world and connected them so beautifully.

Good work, mister! And precious rare. And after one phone call, I still can't say that I know him, but what little I've glimpsed is inspiring. In March, Patrick was nominated as a Young Global Leader 2009. This honour is bestowed by the World Economic Forum each year to recognize the 200 most distinguished young leaders under the age of 40 from around the world. 

There's a lot more to know about both **Insight Partners**. To read more, visit: [www.insightpartnersonline.com](http://www.insightpartnersonline.com). [www.insightcollaborative.org](http://www.insightcollaborative.org).

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Patrick McWhinney working at the International Criminal Court.



Patrick with the Luis Moreno Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in the Hague.



Patrick with business magnate, Sir Richard Branson. Photos courtesy of Patrick McWhinney



# What's your passion?

## Architecture

By Jeffrey Cheng '00

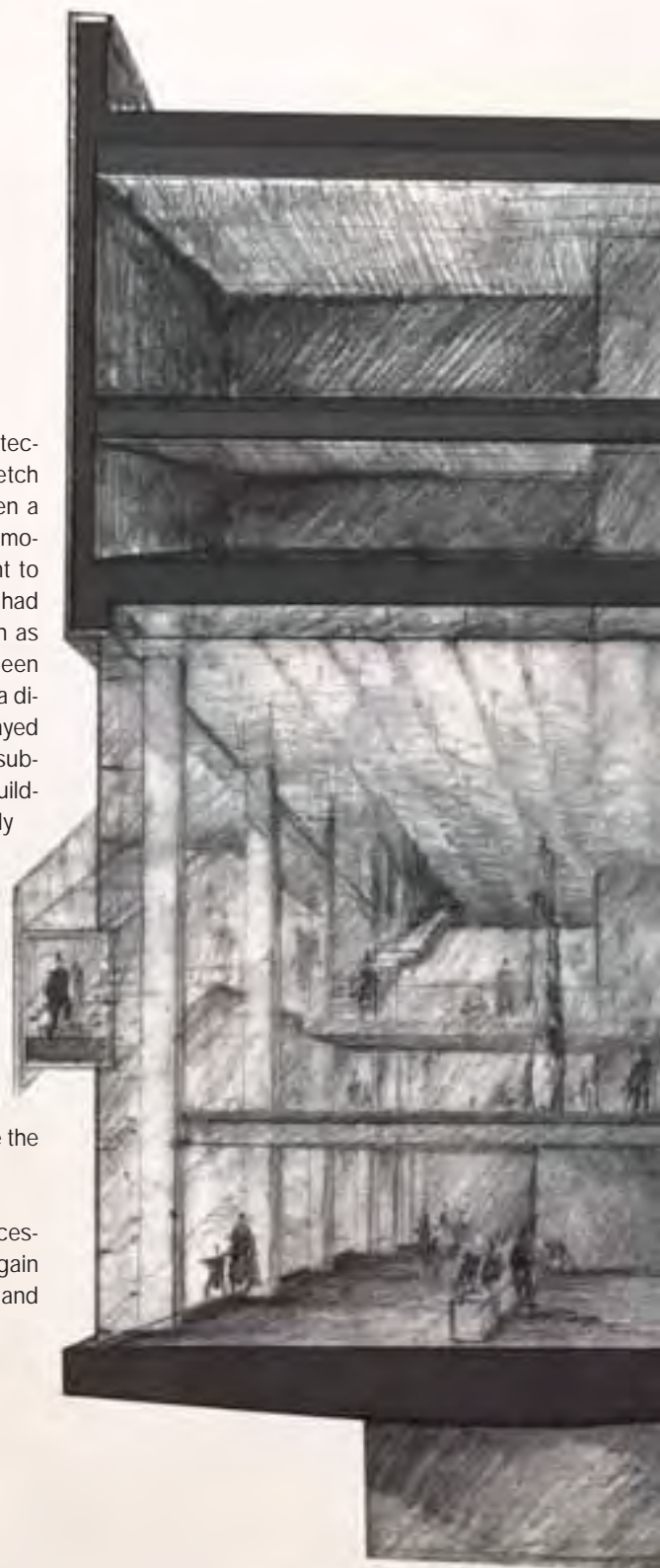
If you take the train an hour north from Rome, you'll notice a plateau abruptly rising six storeys from the volcanic plains. This is Orvieto. The natural cliff faces have been extended by tall city walls. The stone of its walls and buildings is the same soft stone on which the city has been erected, so that the entire complex has, with time, fused into a single inhabited whole. There is something fascinating about how Orvieto is constructed. Each home, every window, the way the doorways meet the street in a way that hints at who is inside and their

*In a way, the city is a canvas, each building an aggregate at once unique and part of a common identity*

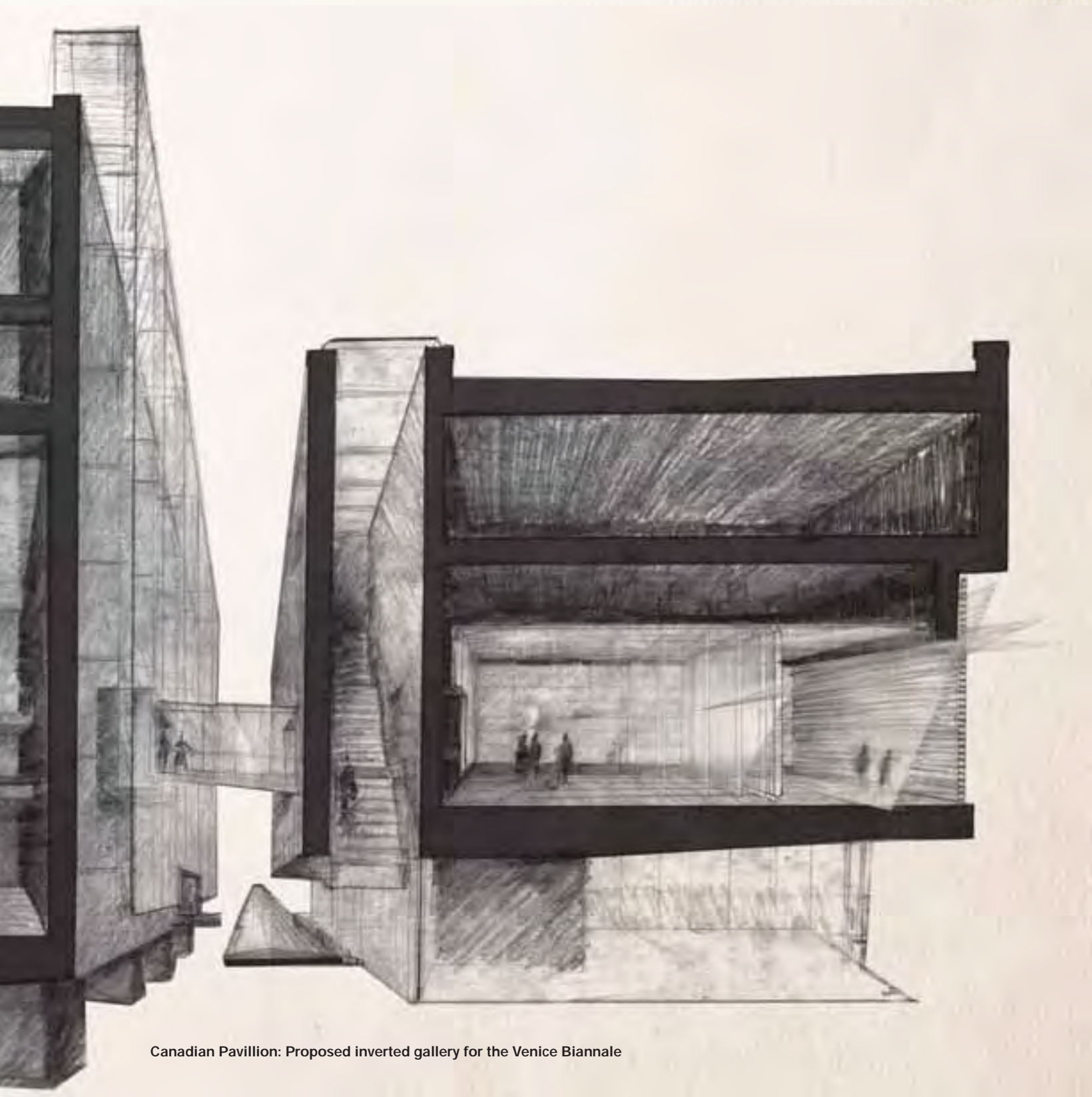
relation with the larger community. In a way, the city is a canvas, each building an aggregate at once unique and part of a common identity. If you catch it at dusk, the ensemble glows gold.

It is not clear when I decided to pursue architecture. Looking back on main lessons and sketch books, cities and buildings seem to have been a consistent field of investigation. A definitive moment, however, was in Grade 10 when I went to Berlin on exchange. The deal for reunification had been struck and the decision to restore Berlin as the capital city of Germany had recently been made. The true shifting of consciousness from a divided city to capital city, however, was being played out in concrete, steel and glass: Streets and subways were being reconnected, bullet-ridden buildings restored and a glassy dome already crowned the reopened Reichstag parliament building. Tearing down or preserving the Berlin Wall became an exercise in either reinventing itself or accepting its past. Similarly, the opening of the Jewish Museum (if only Daniel Libeskind had done the same for Toronto's ROM) and recent Holocaust Memorial were concrete attempts to squarely confront the past. But the essential spaces of the city, the streets and squares, were where the true reconstruction was occurring.

Public gathering spaces, once divided or inaccessible, were being rehabilitated so that once again Berliners from the East and West could meet and reclaim all of Berlin as their own.







Canadian Pavillion: Proposed inverted gallery for the Venice Biennale



Back in Toronto, city building was at a low point during the mid 1990s. A slew of cultural renewal projects had yet to be announced, and our collective ambition was as far reaching as Mayor Mel Lastman's Sheppard stub. Yet, beneath Toronto's drab surface, something vibrant was brewing. Even as a kid, I knew there was no better place for Chinese food outside of China, but you couldn't tell by driving past all those banal suburban strip malls. Driving past the endless rows of development is like passing a miniature model of the world. Times Squares and faux French palaces desperately strive for cultural legitimacy by borrowing heavily from our collective past. But in their transplantation along Highway 7, their context has been stripped away, and their architecture frustratingly hyperexpressive without being articulate. The sophisticated food prepared inside is being serviced by a clumsy architecture that is aesthetically confusing and functionally inadequate.

*Look to our city of  
Toronto to see how the  
way we've built fails to  
connect us to geogra-  
phy and natural systems  
and has spawned our  
environmental crises*

I developed a taste for Shanghainese beef noodle soup, even if it meant sitting at an aluminum table with uneven legs with a view of the parking lot beyond frilly synthetic curtains. I loved getting lost in the tightly packed shelves at the grocer's. Mangos,

star fruit and fresh spiky durians, alongside piles of rice bags, were a reality of my upbringing. But to get to the supermarket after a bowl of beef noodle soup meant finding the car and driving a few paces down the highway, missing out on the stationery store and the pastry shop along the way. Frau Inge Shukla, our German teacher at TWS, once told us that in the "Old World", all the cobblers could be found on the same street, and the smithies on another, because adjacencies, even with competitors, encouraged business. Why then, did we choose to construct our city in a mutually suppressing way? And why did we choose to diminish its vibrant activities with an inarticulate architecture?

The resultant landscape is like a feudal collection of parts, where everyone has their fiefdom and its palace, but no one knows the territory as a whole or seen inside each other's castles.



**Canadian Pavillion:  
Proposed inverted gallery for the Venice Biennale**

Look to recent riots in and around Johannesburg, South Africa or Paris, France, where the environment has failed to reconnect disenfranchised people with each other and a larger meaning. Or, look to our city of Toronto to see how the way we've built fails to connect us to geography and natural systems and has spawned our environmental crises.

If there is any reward to sharing the richness of our individual experience, and to recognizing in our fellow citizens the same ambitions, dreams and fears that we have, this poverty of collective experience must be improved. Berlin demonstrated that even a heavily divided city could re-engage to satisfy the deeply seated human need for social engagement and meaning found in a collective consciousness. And Berlin introduced me to the delight of architecture as an art for building community.

*When seen at a distance, the infinite horizon punctured by its verticality marks for its citizens a place within nature to call home*

At the centre of Orvieto, where the town reaches the crest of the plateau, the compact golden coloured buildings suddenly part and give way to an enclosed common space.

Here, in the palm of the city, citizens gather and crisscross from one store to another. It's like a carefully choreographed dance where each member tends to their business without bumping into one another. The bustle is shielded from the hot sun by a dignified shadow, cast from the city's only building constructed of marble. Its form is disciplined by geometry. Its symmetrical face stands in powerful contrast to the organic city around it. Gold tipped sculpture and polychromatic inlaid bands glisten in sunlight. When seen at a distance, the infinite horizon punctured by its verticality marks for its citizens a place within nature to call home. ■

By Jeffrey Cheng '00  
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Left to right: Urban Armature Study: Uffizi, Florence, Italy; City+water: Canal, Venice, Italy; Baroque studies: Constantine's baptistry extension, Rome, Italy



# Reflections on a Reunion: Class of '88

By Larissa McWhinney '88

October 29, 2008

I try to say the words without tears, but I can't. "The sun with loving light.... "I look into the world...." It amazes me that these verses have such impact after so many years, more so now than ever before. Is it just nostalgia? At first I thought it might be. But after attending the 20th reunion of the graduation of my class – the Class of 1988 – in June 2008, I realized that the strong feelings evoked by these simple but profound words are based on a deep sense of gratitude and love.

I am not alone in this. Our reunion was marked by great affection for each other as classmates, and heartfelt thanks to the place and people that made it all happen. This was nowhere more clear than in the intimate "class circle," where we shared reflections on our lives since graduation, and engaged in the daunting, but meaningful, task of affirming ourselves to each other...

*It was like finding lost siblings: re-establishing contact felt natural and easy.*

We were a motley crew, seated in a high school classroom with Mrs. Helga Rudolph, one of our cherished advisors, facilitating the proceedings. There were 26 of us in all, setting a record for reunion attendance. 12 had been in our Grade 1 class, five had stayed through graduation, and 11 of us had been in our Grade 12 class. We were an amazing reflection of our collective history. Although many of us had stayed in, or re-established, contact since leaving the school, others had been missing in action until the reunion and had not been seen in as many as 30 years. Thanks to the Internet and its various progeny such as Facebook, and to many phone



calls and messages to random (patient and helpful) people with common last names in the months preceding the reunion, we gradually located, and started the process of reconnection with, those who had fallen out of touch.

It was like finding lost siblings: re-establishing contact felt natural and easy. Even though we didn't

necessarily know who we had become, we knew where we had come from, and our common ground was still so fertile that it easily nourished new seeds of friendship and solidarity. We recounted our respective trajectories since Waldorf, mused about the old days, and provided short biographies of where we were, along with pictures of our current incarnations. We weren't able to find everyone who

*Left to right, top to bottom: Lee Armet & Laurens Wit; Lee Armet, Mr. Ney and Saskia DeHaan; Lucas Sorbara and Eva Maria Boehringer; Mr. Rudolph and Class of '88; Sebastian Henrikson and Lucas Sorbara; Stacey Robertson and Carmelita Huppeler; Nadim Ghaznavi; Evan Wood and Altaire Gural; Su (Laine) Varkey*



had been part of our evolving family over the 15 years that some of us had been at TWS, but almost everyone we did contact was thrilled to be reached, even if unable to attend. By the time the reunion took place, we had already effectively reunited, allowing the weekend at TWS to be that much deeper. And deep it was.

...In the circle in our old classroom, the years and nerves gradually dissolved as we retraced our past and described our present. There were laughter and tears, regrets and apologies, autobiographies and anecdotes, jokes and serious reflections. Multiple layers and complexities emerged as we distilled years of emotions, personalities, perspectives and experiences into a few words and a couple of hours.

What was shared was intense, diverse and far-ranging, but the overall message was clear: while our lives may have taken different paths, some crossing frequently, others rarely, we mean a great deal to each other, and were, still are, have become or will become, seminal figures in each other's lives.

There was frivolity too. The weekend began on Friday night with drinks at a country pub, and as the beer flowed, so did the "remember whens . . . .?" There was the "love-dovey" fort some of us built in the back woods in Grade 3 to study the art of kissing until our class teacher, then Miss Elisabeth Hoffman, found us out and marched us back to the classroom in mock disgrace. There was the April Fool's trick we played on the obliging Mr. Duncan Alderson, transporting our entire classroom outside, desks and all, for that morning's Parzival main lesson; and the one we played in Dr. Marty Levin's calculus class, crowding into the classroom's tiny closet, and finally tumbling out when we were eventually found. We were a fun, spirited and strong-willed class. Even 20 years on, we seemed like the same experience-loving, caring, intense and reflective group of friends (and occasional enemies!) that we were then.

*There were laughter and tears, regrets and apologies, autobiographies and anecdotes, jokes and serious reflections.*

After the pub event, some of us reconvened at TWS for the graduation of the current Grade 12s. Parts of the event were so beautiful we were moved to tears. As the graduates walked up to the stage arm in arm with their parents, I found myself simultaneously remembering my own past and

Left to right, top to bottom: Su Laine Varkey & Evan Wood; Mrs. McWhinney & Mrs. Koekebakker; Ihor Radysh & Marisha Plotnik; Larissa McWhinney & Marisha Plotnik; Sebastian Henrickson & Lucas Sorbara; Nils Junge & Mr. Rudolph; Karin (Nanke) Sikora; Logan & Hailey; Alumni reunion group portrait



*A mentorship database is now being created to facilitate intergenerational connections among alumni/ae*

imagining my children's future. It was an amazing liminal and transitional moment: A fleeting, crystalline impression of the cycles of life. The current Grade 12s are a wonderful, amazingly talented group of individuals that would make any parent and teacher proud.

They further underscored for me the value of Waldorf education and community in today's hurried and disconnected world. It was a true privilege for classmate Nils Junge and me to take the stage at one point to welcome these initiates into the alumni/ae fold.

Although they don't appear to need it, as a gift from our class to theirs, we encouraged them to approach us for any advice and guidance we might be able to offer as they navigate the world beyond Waldorf. A mentorship database is now being created to facilitate inter-generational connections among alumni/ae. On Saturday morning, our class reconvened at TWS for presentations by the dearly loved Mrs. Elis-

abeth (Hoffman) Chomko, Mrs. Helga Rudolph, and classmate Marisha Plotnik, among others. Lunch followed, in the company of former teachers, classmates, their partners and children, and the wonderful alumni/ae staff and coordinators who were instrumental in putting the reunion weekend together. After a school tour led by another of our esteemed advisors, Mr. Gerhard Rudolph, and the cathartic class circle, we planted a tree in honour of the graduation of class of '08 the night before.

That evening, we reconvened at the house of former classmate Lee Armet and his wife Mary for a fantastic BBQ that lasted (for some!) into the wee




Left to right, top to bottom: Sebastian Henrickson; Garret Laffree; Lucas Sorbara; Mrs. Smokski; Mrs. (Hoffman) Chomko; Saskia De Haan and Nadim Ghaznavi; Kevin Carter; Karin (Nanke) Sikora

## *I love who we were, but more so who we have become*

hours, thanks to our hosts' unbridled hospitality. On Sunday, the hardy of us met again at Mrs. Chomko's house for a farewell brunch. It was an intense whirlwind of wonderful events and powerful interactions that had many of us wishing we had a week or more. The concept of an annual alumni/ae class trip didn't seem far-fetched! When the weekend began, I had felt a strong desire to be back in school again. I remembered (albeit through rosy-

coloured glasses) the excitement of coming to class each day. Perhaps inspired by my 18-month-old daughter's innocent passion for life, I had a yearning to be young(er) again, and to see the world afresh through her eyes, as the sun shines bright for her each day. But as the weekend progressed, my feelings evolved. I realized that as much as I appreciated and loved my classmates as they were then, I feel even closer to many of them now. I love who we were, but more so who we have become.

We have each looked into the world in different ways and have an impressive collective CV. Our

strength and grace and skill, for learning and for work, have clearly continued to live and grow. We have become a strong, vibrant, caring group of adults, thanks in large part, most of us seemed to think, to the love and care we were shown at TWS for whatever time we were lucky enough to be there. Over the years, I have come to realize how valuable such a cherished and strong circle of friends is to one's sense of purpose and well-being in the world. This reunion was a beautiful testament to that. Thank you all. 

Larissa McWhinney '88  
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Left to right, top to bottom: Mrs. Ghaznavi; Anna Murley and Dylan; Mr. Pickering; Andrew Cowderoy; Kaija (Stewart) Pitt and Alexandra; Bret Hoeffler; Christina Fugere; Eva Maria Boehringer





# On the other side of the desk

By Michelle Huppeler '86

My roots were planted long ago, even before my first kindergarten class at the Toronto Waldorf School, my first home away from home. The year before, I'd had a stormy, if brief, encounter with my local public school. Luckily it only lasted two days before my mother decided to keep me home another year. We all have special childhood memories that

we treasure, and mine was that extra year on our farm. My mother ran a small daycare and I was allowed to roam freely. I spent carefree days catching tadpoles in the creek and chasing butterflies. This time of blissful innocence has stayed with me.

My first year at the Toronto Waldorf School was a natural extension of my home life. I felt secure, held and was able to engage fully in play that I believe has contributed to my strong work ethic. My best friend, Jennifer Sandkuhler, whom I have never forgotten, helped me engage in mischief. I recall tearing down the houses that Michi and Mary had so meticulously built. Jennifer and I were promptly sent into the hallway by Mrs. Sparling, known as "Mrs.

Sparkling." There we continued our mischief, turning pussy willows into swords. Our imaginations seemed endless and so did our play. The journey from Grade 1 to Grade 4 resonates in

*Today I realize that every lesson must have been crafted with such care and devotion*

my memory like a dream. I do not recall specifics so much as feelings. Stories held me spellbound and colours flowed through me. My teacher, Mel Belenson, taught me to read, write and do arithmetic, although I could not tell you how. Above all, he infused me with an endless joy in growth. Today I realize that every lesson must have been crafted with such care and devotion. Our teacher was a master, and delivered everything seemingly without effort. The only break in this endless river of wonder

In March, I had the privilege of attending the 8th World Waldorf Conference in Dornach, Switzerland with four colleagues from the Alan Howard Waldorf School in Toronto. The theme was to consider the polarity of thinking and will that underlies imagination through all stages of child development and adulthood. I chose to attend a workshop given by Christopher Clouder, a leading figure in building bridges between Waldorf education and other educators interested in protecting the humanities curriculum in childhood. The conference inspired and reaffirmed my own path towards transforming conventional ideas around education that limit growth and learning to brain activity.

came when he lost his patience with a student, usually Alexander Arnett, who seemed to constantly challenge him. Other than these occasional hiccups, my early years were passed in a blissful dreamlike state. These early memories have been marked precious and stored away for safe keeping.

Life is full of awakenings, some more pleasant than others. One of these came in Grade 5, when my parents decided to transfer me and my sisters, Jeanette and Carmelita, to our local public school. I was open and eager to learn. I quickly rose to the top of my class, where I was segregated to one side of the room with four other so-called "bright" students. My vocabulary grew in leaps and bounds. Not only was I a voracious reader, but I was also picking up a lot in the playground. When I tested a new word, my mother would pretend not to know it. Looking back, she must have been mortified by some of my newly acquired vocabulary. At the time, I did not think much of the change although the difference in the systems was pronounced.

During high school, I lost interest in academics altogether and my social life took priority. Earning money also ranked high on my list. Few teachers gained my respect or caught my attention. In retrospect, the only subject in high school that has served me well was Grade 9 typing.


At age 18, after a series of service industry jobs, I packed two suitcases and moved to Switzerland. I simply felt there had to be more to life. When I arrived in Zurich, I walked up and down the Bahnhof Strasse, and in my broken German, asked in every store if they needed help. Eventually I landed a job as a clerk in the back office of a brokerage firm

I spent the next 10 years dividing my time between Toronto, Zurich and Geneva. I travelled extensively, learning both on and off the job. My education was unconventional, yet effective for my personal growth. I changed jobs yearly. Upon

reflection, I realize I needed to do this in order to learn how to sit still.

In my late 20s, I returned to Toronto, still restless. Hungry for a sense of fulfillment, I completed my B.A. in ethics, society and law at the University of Toronto. This time, my educational experience was much different. I savoured every course with my newfound hunger for knowledge, perhaps because I had chosen my course of study out of interest, rather than in pursuit of a specific career goal. It was then that I discovered the gift of self-discipline.

At the age of 30, my education continued with the birth of my son, who gave me the gift of selflessness. With each passing year, he continues to inspire me to learn. Jules is now 10 years old and attending the Alan Howard Waldorf School in downtown Toronto. I am grateful to my son for reawakening my sense of wonder and leading me back to my Waldorf roots. It was not long before my volunteer work at his school drew me away from the corporate world and back into the classroom where my love of learning had first been cultivated.

Like a precious seed, a child is carried and held through the Waldorf curriculum, given warmth, nourishment and light to grow. It seems obvious that an education geared toward the development of the whole human being will contribute to the building of a society that promotes global health and happiness. This brings me back to my own path of transforming conventional ideas around education that limit growth and learning to brain activity. My personal journey seems so long, yet has been so short in the larger scheme of life. There will always be more to learn and do; however I am grateful to be able to contribute to a healthier humanity through an awareness shaped by Rudolf Steiner's work around the education of the whole human being. 

*Michelle Huppeler '86  
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**LÉNA D'OSTIE-RACINE '00** attended the École Rudolf Steiner de Montreal until Grade 4. She then joined Miss Humphrey's Grade 5 class at Toronto Waldorf School. To her surprise, Léna met a reality from which she still enjoys memories of four-season camping trips, Greek Olympics, class plays and many good friends and teachers. After her OACs, she travelled and then completed an honours B.A. in psychology at Concordia University. Now undertaking a professional doctorate in clinical psychology at the Université de Montréal, Léna works periodically in a women's shelter. Her doctoral essay will likely assess the impact of abolishing health care user fees within a pilot project in Burkina Faso. She loves cycling, daydreaming about sleeping, capoeira and Guinean dance classes, as well as goofing around with friends and family, especially Simone, the two-year-old daughter of sister Noeli.

**BILL HARLOW** was raised in Toronto and attended George S. Henry Secondary School, then the University of Toronto. He began his career in the family business, Upper Canada Child Care when they operated three locations in Don Mills. They now operate almost 50 centres in the GTA as well as Kettleby Valley Camp. The family business took another direction and became the Canadian distributors of a popular plush gift toy. Ty Canada was very successful, with sales growth of almost 30 times in eight years. Bill has always believed in being involved in the community. In the late '90s, he worked closely with Sports Celebrates Festivals, a non-profit charitable organization that raises money for Special Olympics. Bill feels very privileged to serve on the board at TWS and feels a strong commitment to be a part of its continued growth.



# Way Out of Bounds in Chile & Ghana

By Lena D'Ostie-Racine '00

In the fall of 1998, I was 16, entering Grade 11 and knew very little about geography and politics outside the Waldorf bubble I had lived in for 14 years.

All I knew was that I wanted to go on a six-month school exchange in a distant land, as had so many students before me, and return to Toronto Waldorf School metamorphosed, with new stories, dreadlocks and speaking another language.

Photos courtesy of Lena D'Ostie-Racine



In Chile, Lena helped to teach juggling to youth through a program run by an independent circus trainer.



Youth in a small fishing village, Chanavaya, were taught the basics of walking with stilts and other circus skills such as pyramid making and acrobatics.



Children as young as age four participated in the circus classes offered to children of families participating in social services support programs in Chile.

I ended up living with my sponsor family on their biodynamic farm while attending a Waldorf school in Solothurn, Switzerland, and the changes that occurred to me were rather unexpected. I didn't cultivate dreadlocks or become fluent in German, but I did gain 15 lbs thanks to the delicious raclette and the chocolate! And my three-week practicum through the Solothurn school, on the building site of a new anthroposophical hospital in a small town near Timisoara, Romania, changed my understanding of the world and of my place in it.

A month after my arrival, my classmates and I took a long train ride to Bucharest, Romania. Little hands of children begging for food or money were outstretched as we stepped off the train. Had I opened a guidebook, I would have expected this, but at the time, I was stunned by the economic discrepancies between Switzerland and Romania. For the first time, I realized how much our birthplace and community can impact every part of our development. Watching children's eyes roll within their sockets after a plastic bag filled with glue had been passed

around and each — many younger than 10 — had taken a sniff, I felt that the world, that humanity, had failed them. I was left with a powerful sense of the global imbalances of luck, of justice, and with an eagerness to see more of the world and to take action against such unfairness.

High school was followed by two years of travel and short job contracts. I'm especially grateful for my four-month contract with TWS in 2003, assisting with Sue Martin's kindergarten class, where I learned so much about children's development. In September 2003, I began a B.A. in psychology at Concordia University in Montreal, graduating in April 2007. Most classes somehow grabbed my attention, but I felt a constant yearning to learn and interact outside the structures of academia.

Thanks to many TWS supporters, I was able to participate in the international cooperation internship programs offered by Québec Sans Frontières and CREDIL that took six other Quebecers and I to Northern Chile for the summer of 2006. Families of a small fishing village, Chanavaya, nestled between

the steep Cordillera and the ocean's waves, hosted our group. They showed us their way of living and we facilitated workshops in nutrition, exercise, emergency drills, crafts and other cultural activities. We also learned about their scallop micro-culture subsistence project and supported them physically and financially.

My favourite part of the internship was on weekdays when I travelled to the ghetto of Iquique and assisted a psychosocial support program, Hogar de Cristo, a government institution that provides social services, targeting families living with drug abuse problems. I also worked with a program geared toward our clients' children, run by an independent circus trainer named Kanatran, who had once taught with Circo del Mundo, a youth circus training program founded in 1995 by Chilean circus artists with the support of Canada's Cirque du Soleil and Jeunesse du Monde.

I assisted a psychologist evaluating women's satisfaction of the program and with circus classes for youth ranging from 4 to 16 years old, helping to



teach the basics of juggling, pyramid making, acrobatics and stilt-walking. It was such a pleasure not only to teach, laugh and play with these youth but also to witness the positive impact that such a program could have on their lives.

With dedication and practice, these youth would eventually have the chance to join the semi-professional performing troupe formed in 1995 by older youth who also trained with Kanatran and whose “at high risk” status for crime, dropping out, early pregnancy and drug addiction dropped considerably. Whether the children eventually joined this troupe or not, the circus classes were a fun and safe place for exploring social interactions, for observing role models and for throwing one’s self in

*The circus classes were a fun and safe place for exploring social interactions, for observing role models*

after all — but called back by my degree requirements, I said my farewells, travelled a few weeks in Bolivia and returned to my books.

My final year in undergrad turned out to be great! My classes on human development, cross-cultural psychology, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, fine arts and

the air, trusting that a mattress or strong hands would secure one’s landing. I considered becoming a permanent circus amateur there — yes, I am TWS’s former gym and circus teacher and circus trainer Jacques Racine’s daughter

my honours thesis on parental teaching and child development consumed me. Finally, it was time to go into the “real” world and apply the previous lessons. My interest in the HIV/AIDS pandemic had been fuelled considerably over this last year. Somehow, the virus is able to thrive among the most vulnerable and marginalized populations because of economic disparities, stigmatization and taboos regarding sexuality, along with many other reasons. It is a battle fraught with so much controversy and so many ethically sensitive issues that it merits the world’s attention and grabbed my focus for the next nine months.

I took off in August 2007 to Ghana, where I worked in three different towns during a six-month youth employment internship, funded by the Canada International Development Agency and facilitated by Horizon Cosmopolite, a Montreal based organization.



Siaka Diara teaching Lena the N'goni, Kokrobite, Ghana



In African countries, Lena learned that things rarely turn out as expected.

I spent the first month in Accra, the capital city, the second month in Obuasi, a mining town near at the center of the country, and the remaining four months in the beautiful Volta region, in a town called Hohoe.


My original mandate was to assist a Ghanaian non-governmental organization or NGO, called Pro-Link, in its efforts to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in various regions of the country. I was advised in advance that things abroad, especially in African countries, rarely turn out as expected and so was not surprised when our mandate was changed. Eventually I managed to recuperate my original mission. We spent the first month at Pro-Link's head office in Ghana writing and editing project proposals and reports, and then were sent to Obuasi, to

work on a project against child labour in illegal mines. Finally, we went to Hohoe, where three new mandates were proposed, including starting an orphans' club, which was gratifying even if the participation was low and irregular. Pro-Link's staff was torn between providing comprehensive sexual health education and keeping its good relations with current and past funders such as PEPFAR, and school and religious leaders.

There were many challenges, some because of the undependable infrastructure, others by the fact that rare funds arrived from overseas, hence from a very different reality. Sometimes our non-governmental organization or NGO failed to schedule the meetings, sometimes the schools could not receive us, and there were always a multitude of reasons for not accomplishing goals we had set for ourselves. We spent weeks going to rural villages from house to house hunting for "civic address" numbers written in chalk, as required by the overseas funder's auditor. But the concept of an address makes no sense in a village where everyone refers to their house by its landmarks. (And, yes, chalk does fade with rain!

Before this internship, I remember wanting to go off to a distant land and come back knowing that I had made some kind of concrete and positive impact. Once more, I came home weighing an extra 10 lbs (this time it was the banku and fufu) and although there were still no dreadlocks, I had braids. I had thought I would come back with more lucid thoughts on international development but returned all the more perplexed.

Seeing poverty and its consequences is tormenting, but with time, I realized that even in zones of hardship, it is still the small things we do and the people who bring meaning to the bigger changes we strive for. My Ghanaian and Burkinabe friends were such a pleasure, so generous with everything and anything they had, and whatever they gave me was usually accompanied by a contagious laughter and smile, regardless of the suffering they had endured.

Once again, I would have loved to stay and continue my HIV classes in Western Africa, but I wanted to educate myself further. So, I began a PsyD, a professional doctorate of psychology, in September at Université de Montréal and have been slowly re-integrating in Montreal and working in a shelter for women living with domestic violence. 

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# Way Out of Bounds

## On the road in California

By Rebecca Martin '02

**In the fall of 2007, my friend Allison and I decided we could bike to California. That's about how it started – a few bike rides and conversations about how great it is to ride bikes and we were committed.**





Nine months was a long time to wait for spring to arrive, and while we gathered gear, saved money and looked at the map, the worries started

mounting. Where in the world had I gotten the idea that I could ride my bike from British Columbia to California? My longest bike ride so far had been about 35 kms, through some of Ontario's not-so-rolling countryside, and the mountains of the Pacific Coast were looming larger and larger as the departure date approached. But then one day, it was just time to go, so we loaded the bikes, squeezed into our stretchy shorts, and headed off.



After a quick stop in Victoria, we headed south. The first few days were tentative; we travelled short distances and stopped often to consult the guidebook, but we were moving, we were on the "bike trip"! After so much anticipation, the satisfaction of being on the road was immense. The miles seemed to stretch endlessly ahead of us, and we had all the time in the world to get where we were going. As we slipped into a comfortable rhythm of riding and eating and camping, we realized this was it, this was the "fun" we had been told about when people said, "Oh, you're going to have so much fun" or "Wow, have fun!" We had worried that it might take a few days of stiff muscles and sore bodies before we adjusted, and started having fun, but every moment was great.

With nothing to do but ride, it became an almost meditative experience. I had wondered if I would get bored, or become frustrated by our relatively slow pace, but instead my thoughts became clearer and my appreciation of the world around me deepened. It never occurred to me to wish we could move faster or cover

more miles in a day. Each day seemed to extend far beyond the normal measures of time, eventful and important and almost too full.

Early on, I became addicted and wanted nothing more than to ride. The days when the sun shone and the wind was at our backs were most enjoyable, but even on a cold day, with rain pelting in horizontal sheets against our right shoulders, we still felt good — we were biking to California. Most of all, I just felt the joy of riding, of being out in the open, uncontained, which was not only exhilarating, but rewarded us with the scents and sounds and sensations of the environment. Arriving in the redwood forest, pedalling silently amongst the majestic trees thoroughly embodied this experience, I wrote in my journal: "I had expected to feel so small, riding through the redwoods, but instead I feel enormous, expansive, as if the boundaries between 'me' and the 'world' have faded away."

*The miles seemed to stretch endlessly ahead of us, and we had all the time in the world to get where we were going*

As we travelled, we were often approached and asked: "Where are you headed? San Francisco! Really, all the way from Canada?" Their amazement was refreshing and their curiosity was good food for thought as I pedalled away. Why was I doing this? I had many reasons before I left, and they continued to build as the trip progressed. There were so many moments where I knew that this is why I am here, somewhere on Highway 101, southbound. There was the day that I was so happy to be riding that I laughed out loud; the moment when I really understood, as I breathed steadily in and out, the perfect harmony with which my heart and lungs and legs worked to constantly move forward. And to know that every day was a journey, that time stretched out long and slow because every minute was counted and every mile was

a great distance. One day Allison said to me, "Quick! What do you love most about this trip?" Later that day I wrote down my answers, in no particular order: "I love biking. I love it much more now than I ever did. And being part of the cycling culture, feeling part of a group of strangers connected across space and time. I love that my body has become strong and resilient, that I am learning to love and trust it. I love being outside every day, falling asleep and waking up outside. I love the feeling of being exactly where I am and not wishing to be anywhere else. I think this is part of why I have these moments of faith, of pure understanding that I am well-loved and protected and in my rightful place in the universe."

And then one day, we arrived. I guess I had always known we would, but I still remember my feeling when I heard my friend say, "It looks like we're about 17 miles from the Golden Gate Bridge." My heart dropped, and I had to sit down for a minute, to really think about that. In my mind, 17 miles translated as about two more hours of riding. And then what? Who will I be then, when I am no longer on the bike trip?



It was a difficult couple of days, even weeks, trying to return to something like real life, especially when life had never felt so real or so immediate as during those 32 days. What I most hope to keep is the deep sense of gratitude I developed — for being kept safe and secure along hundreds of miles of highway, for a body so adaptable and reliable, for the opportunity to wake up each day full of enthusiasm and anticipation, and for the moments when everything was so clear and so good that I wanted to stop each passing car and say, "Get out! Don't you know that the sun is shining and the wind is warm, that you could be part of it, like I am?" ■

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# Storyteller teaches from the heart

## *Faculty Feature*

Yasmeen Mamdani, Librarian

By Yasmeen Mamdani

I am a teacher and my purpose is to teach. This is one of the few things in my life that I can say without hesitation as this knowledge of this has come to me from a place of clarity and deep conviction. Though the path has often been challenging and sometimes even complicated, I have never doubted my purpose or questioned how my path has come to meet me. Along the way, I have found myself asking questions and always searching for newer and richer ways to bring meaning and purpose to the work I was doing. The further along I came, the deeper the urgency to find my place as the educator I was meant to be. I felt compelled to go beyond the traditional walls of the classroom and explore further my role as a teacher.

This search led me first to Japan, where I lived and worked for three years, and then to Mexico, where I immersed my self in the culture for two years. Through these experiences, I was fortunate to be

exposed to different approaches and philosophies of education while working with children. The possibility of learning in ways different from what I had always known was refreshing and allowed me to come to a different understanding about who I was and how and where I was to fit into the world around me. It was during these experiences also, that I first began to recognize the critical role that community, culture and tradition play in the formation of the individual. In these cultures, it was recognized that the learning of the mind is only one element of the overall picture of learning. I began to see and truly understand – perhaps for the first time – that education in its truest sense goes far beyond mere intellectual learning and encompasses the complete journey of the individual towards an integrated comprehension of life in all of its complexity.

After several years of living and working internationally, I returned to Canada and worked for sev-

eral years as a teacher of young children. Unfortunately, I soon found myself disappointed, as I began to lose my excitement and vigour for teaching. I was discouraged by the hurried pace of learning that I was faced with on a daily basis, where the general belief prevailed that if you were not speeding ahead in your learning, then you were surely falling behind. Once again, more questions arose for me regarding the meaning and purpose of education and my search continued.

To find inspiration in my work and lift myself out of my disillusionment with the teaching profession, I began to attend storytelling events hosted by the Vancouver Storytelling Association. It was at this time that I was first introduced to storytelling as an art form. Having taught at public schools for several years, I had read countless books and stories to many students across the grades. I had enjoyed the stories almost as much as the students to whom I was reading, but always, because of con-





straints on time, story time was rarely more than an occasional filler between lessons or a welcome respite of quiet “entertainment” at the end of a long and busy day. Never had I even considered the profound impact of a story being told as a sacred act.

At these events, however, I would find myself sitting as witness to a profound and powerful magic that would take over the entire room as a story was being told. I surrendered as the words of the story sprang to life and the being of the story entered the room. I was amazed at the hush that would fall over a room when a story was really doing its work and reaching the hearts of its listeners and I was hooked. I began to take classes in storytelling wherever I could find them and was soon searching for more to satisfy this new hunger within me. After much searching and investigation, I came across a place called Emerson College in the UK that offered comprehensive training in none other than the art of storytelling. On the back of the brochure was an ad for a teacher-training program in Waldorf education. Something clicked inside of me and I needed to know more. And the more I learned about Waldorf, the more I knew I had found an answer to my search for something more.

After graduating from the teacher-training program, I joined the faculty at the Toronto Waldorf School in 2000 and took the first steps down the path of learning with my class of 28 eager students. Together, we prepared ourselves to journey down eight years of growing and learning. It seemed a daunting task to take on, but one which I embraced wholeheartedly. Along the way, our beloved stories were there to accompany us and light our way through the unknown. Throughout my years of learning with my class; whether it be the fairy tales of Grade 1, the stories of the saints in our second year, the stories of the Old Testament in third Grade or the Norse myths of Grade 4, I began to understand with my heart and not just my head the whys behind all of the emphasis that is placed on storytelling in the Waldorf curriculum.

I could see the children thriving and almost being nourished by the wisdom and mystery contained within the stories each day. Even the “difficult” children were able to settle down and listen – almost as if a part of their hearts were remembering a truth that had somehow faded from their reality. My ex-

In 1999, I enrolled in the Waldorf Teacher Education Program at the Rudolf Steiner Centre and my journey towards finding my purpose as an educator took an unexpected turn. Within this system, I found the answers to many of the questions I had been asking. Here, I could see directly how the wisdom of childhood and all that it contained was not only recognized but also held as sacred. As I learned more about Waldorf education, I felt a deep resonance within me as a sense of purpose and responsibility for teaching became clearer.

perience as a Waldorf class teacher has by no means been perfect or flawless. In fact it has been the hardest job I have ever had and perhaps will ever do. I have found myself in the stream – and sometimes torrents – of learning, not knowing how to keep my head above water. Sometimes I have felt like the task before me was just too big to face. But somehow, at the end of each lesson, there was always a sense of redemption, of hope, of anticipation as both the students and I travelled into the awaiting world of yet another story. A purely magical alchemy can occur when one allows the inner workings of a story to really touch the soul. Through the blessings of each and every story that my class and I have shared, our hearts, minds and souls were forever changed and enriched and for this I am truly grateful.

*Each day that I worked  
with the children was a gift.  
I was awed by the power  
and magic that can be  
created by a simple story.*

Despite all of one’s best-laid plans and sincerest intentions, life sometimes has a plan and purpose that cannot be seen or understood at first glance. In the Fall of 2004, just as I was preparing to guide my class through the rich and exciting adventures of Grade 5, my plans came to an abrupt halt as destiny intervened and once again sent me spiralling into unknown territory. School had only been in session three weeks when an aggressive and rare eye infection caused me to suddenly lose the vision in my right eye. I was devastated. My husband and I had only been married six weeks and just as we were stepping out to begin our lives together, my whole world was crumbling before me. How could this be happening? Why me? What was I supposed to do now? Why? These questions and more were spinning through my head at a blinding speed as I tried desperately to hold onto anything that made sense and that could bring



meaning back into my life. But there were no immediate answers. I was in an excruciating amount of pain that persisted for several months and nothing seemed to help or soothe me for more than a few hours at a time. Due to the rare and aggressive nature of this infection, it was not known how extensive the damage to my eye would be or how long my recovery would take. And so with a reluctant heart, it was decided that it would be best to step aside from my class and allow the search for a new class teacher to begin. Aside from the physical pain caused by my shattered cornea, my heart was breaking and the devastation that I was feeling from this seemed irreparable. Not only was I dealing with the loss of vision in an eye, I was now also faced with the destruction of my own inner vision of myself. Ever since I had been a very young child, teaching was the only thing my heart ever longed to do; the only way I had ever “seen” myself. Now it seemed that along with the physical deterioration of my vision, even my own personal compass would be unable to guide me through the confusion.

*A purely magical alchemy can occur when one allows the inner workings of a story to really touch the soul.*

The pain persisted and my recovery proved to be long and arduous. The only thing we were told by the doctors was that it would take time to heal the infection, time to recover my strength and time to find my way back into the world again. There is a strange paradox that exists in relation to time; when one longs for more time, it appears as an elusive treasure, always, just out of one's reach. However, when one is faced with nothing but time, stretching out in an endless oasis of space, time can sometimes seem like a prison. At least, that was how I felt when I first found myself unable to do much of anything except wallow in my suffering and feed my feelings of doubt, fear and hopelessness.

It is true, however, when they say that “time heals all wounds”, for it was during this time of my convalescence that I found myself gradually able to immerse myself in the simplicity of silence. The quiet surrounding me became a treasured friend and it was in this silence that I began to truly listen and remember. The myriad stories that had filled my heart and mind for so long slowly started to come back to me and I could hear the echoes of these classroom voices begin to reawaken my spirit.

My husband too, in an attempt to distract me from my pain, began to read to me. What a joy and comfort it was to hear his voice filling the space with the words of a story. I began to learn what it means to be a listener. This time I was learning to surrender to a story by emptying my mind of all its clutter and confusion and just allow myself to receive. My newfound attention and awareness to the words of a story allowed the healing of my heart and mind to naturally unfold.

As time progressed, my husband's reading aloud became a daily ritual that we both treasured and looked forward to. It became our special time to connect with each other and share in a moment of quiet together. On one of these occasions, my husband reached for a book that had sat on our shelf for a long time, forgotten and passed over. As he began to read the words of a story, my heart began to stir. Where had I heard these words before? Why were they so familiar to me? It was not long before I realized that my husband had chosen to read to me *The Happy Prince* — the very story that had awakened my love for storytelling so many years before. As I listened to the story once again, something began to transform and when the Happy Prince gave up his eye in order that another could survive, a floodgate of emotion came rushing through me. Hearing again the words of that story once again helped me in ways that I can barely express. I found strength and courage and the hope I needed to get up and carry on with the life I had been given. It was as if, somehow, through those familiar words of that story, I realized that I could see — not just what was physically before me, but what was really inside of me. I realized that I had a task to fulfil and that I had the strength to persevere.



It may seem implausible that hearing one a single story could do all this, but it is true. From that day onwards, I had a renewed hope and a vision to persevere and find my place back in the world.

When the new school year began, I was back but this time everything was different. No longer was I the teacher of my beloved class and no longer could I do the things I had been able to do before. My abilities were significantly limited and my role as a teacher had to be redefined completely. I had lost my confidence and wavered in my trust that I would really be able to take this on. My colleagues at school were ready to accommodate my needs in every way possible and so we began to explore the different ways that I could offer my skills in the classroom. It was not long before the answer appeared to be clear and obvious to everyone in the room – I could tell the children stories. ...

*I was amazed at the hush that would fall when a story was doing its work and reaching the hearts of its listeners.*


And so I did. For that first year of my return to teaching, I would step into the various grades of the Lower school and enter into the enchanted world that each story would bring. Each day that I went to school and worked with the children was a gift and a treasure. I was awed by the power and magic that can be created by a simple story. I saw the children being fed with the sustenance offered in each tale of wonder and adventure and each day I was humbled.

My respect for the storytelling process continues to deepen. With each story I know that my telling becomes more potent as I acknowledge

and surrender to the sacred relationship that exists between the storyteller, the listener and the story itself. Without any of these elements, something is lost and the experience is not as rich or satisfying.

I have spent a lifetime searching for a way in which I could find meaning and purpose in the work that I do in my life. What I have learned about Waldorf education has opened my eyes to the many amazing and profound possibilities that can come from an approach that looks at the whole child and all of the many dimensions of learning. I am convinced that the impact that this education can have on a child is of the utmost importance and necessity to the lives of children today. All children deserve an education that nurtures their potential and recognizes a purpose in life.

Of equal importance, however, is the profound impact that Waldorf education can have on those in the privileged position to work within it. Over the course of the past few years, I have been fortunate to discover the magic and richness of a way of teaching that has transformed my life and the direction that I have followed. Waldorf education and storytelling have gone hand-in-hand in the process of my transformation. I have found healing through the magic and wonder of stories. And through that healing, have come wisdom and gratitude.

I am a teacher and my purpose is to teach. As I continue down this path of discovery, it has become all too clear to me that in order to teach, one must first be willing to learn. Life has its own set of lessons already planned for each of us individually and I will be forever indebted to the wisdom of the lessons that have come to me thus far. Discovering the art of storytelling has allowed my voice to become the instrument of my heart. I am grateful. 

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**MICHELLE HUPPELER** works at the

Alan Howard Waldorf School as the Human Resources Manager and Coordinator, a title which encompasses everything else she does, including assisting the facilitator and running the school newsletter. Michelle "absolutely loves" her job and wouldn't want to be working anywhere else. She is also kept very busy raising her son, who is now in Grade 5.



**NILS JUNG '88** has

been an undercover homeless guy, marathon runner, carpenter, painter, orphanage caregiver, record store clerk, actor, Wall Street drone, translator, and economist, in that order. Now at World Bank in Amman, Jordan, Nils currently divides his time between Washington, DC, where he lives, and Africa, Europe and the Middle East, where he works.



**YASMEEN MAMDANI** has a B.A. from

the University of British Columbia and a B.Ed. from Queen's University. A graduate of the Waldorf teacher training education program at the Rudolf Steiner Centre in Toronto, Yasmeen has taught at Toronto Waldorf School since 2000 and is now Librarian.





# Drama in the classroom

## *Faculty Feature*

By Patti Powell, drama teacher



Waldorf education is said to be a journey for the parents as well as the children. Truly, my experience as a parent of children at various Waldorf schools has been an amazing adventure. My career in Waldorf schools began as a director at the Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School in England. The teacher-training program was open to parents on a drop-in basis so I decided to join the singing class in the morning after I had dropped our boys in to Kindergarten and Grade 1 respectively. The music teacher at Kings Langley was Anne Ayre. Anne was a truly inspired teacher whose love of music and of teaching was an inspiration. After I had joined the class, Anne dis-

covered that I was a director and choreographer who had taken a break from my career. It wasn't long before Anne approached me about directing a show for the upper school. Never having worked with teenagers, before I was a little nervous, but Anne was adamant that I could do it and she introduced me to a fellow teacher in the high school,

*Before long, I was directing plays for the Alan Howard Waldorf School*

Christopher Clouder, who would be my mentor. After two major productions for the high school, my partner Tim Albery and I moved to Canada and before long I was directing plays for the Alan Howard Waldorf School.

In the meantime, I had been working professionally in opera, theatre and dance in England and Canada, whenever I could manage it with family life and now three young boys. In February 2007, I had just finished co-directing and choreographing *The Three Penny Opera* for Souleppper Theatre and thinking, "great, I have a little free time," when the phone rang and the TWS high school was in need






of a drama teacher to step in and direct the Grade 12 play. Without a beat, I said, "of course," and threw myself into the drama program at TWS. The Grade 12 class was a very diverse group from all over the world and after spending a few weeks with them; I felt a European play would work well. With this group and after reading many plays, the group decided on *The Children of the Sun* by Maxim Gorky. This is a wonderful play, full of ideas, revolution, emotions and complicated relationships. I decided we'd

*We also introduced two new stage technical courses so we have students who are now learning the technical side of working in the theatre*



perform the play on the forum floor, as the almost thrust-like stage of the forum is a very difficult space to work in. I felt this arrangement of space worked very well and in fact I have used it again for the following year's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard.

Having now officially taken on the drama teaching for the Just Desserts class at TWS last year, we did a production of *Guys and Dolls*, which involved all of the orchestra students in the music program under the direction of Mrs. Patricia MacMaster and Stan Cyprus. We also introduced two new stage technical courses so we have students who are now learning the technical side of working in the theatre from set design, costume design, lighting, stage management and set construction. The process of mounting a large-scale production in high school takes many, many, hours of hard work, but the transformation that takes place for the students is so profound that I never question whether all the hard work is worth it.

I am looking forward to this year's work with the Grade 12 class, the Grade 10 class and a new performance option that we introduced last year, an introduction to contemporary dance. We are always looking for ways to enhance and improve our program, so this year we have made a few changes in the schedule to try and ease the stress at the end of the year, especially for the Grade 12 class. This year, we are presenting the Grade 12 play, an adaptation of *West Side Story*, in January and the Just Desserts class will present later in the year. I know we have many long hours of rehearsals ahead, of us but the students are excited and the Grade 12 class is bursting with talent and enthusiasm. I hope some of you may find time from your busy work schedules to drop into the forum and see some of our performance work. 

Patti Powell  
ppowell@torontowaldorfschool.com

## REBECCA MARTIN '02

lives on Salt Spring Island, where biking and farming are her favourite ways to spend the day. She plans to move to Nanaimo, British Columbia this winter for training in horticultural therapy and to take many more bike trips.



**LARISSA L. MCWHINNEY '88** started at TWS in Kindergarten and stayed through Grade 12. She has a BA in Philosophy and Ethics from U of T's Trinity College, an MA in Philosophy and Medical Ethics from UBC, and several years of PhD education from U of T where she was a Fellow at Massey College. In 1999, she was awarded a two-year Bioethics Internship at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital. In 2001, she was invited to move to Regina to work on former Premier Roy Romanow's Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. Larissa taught philosophy at the University of Regina, did various contracts for the government, and now works for the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Saskatchewan investigating cases of privacy breach and censorship under three provincial laws. While in the "Queen City," Larissa met Randy Widdis, a geography professor at the University of Regina. They were married in 2004 and are proud parents to Sophia Madeleine (now 2). They are expecting their second child in May 2009.



# Friends of Waldorf Education help spread the vision

By Holger Niederhausen



**W**aldorf teachers around the world want to educate children in such a way that they can develop each child's unique individuality. Their intention is to nurture imagination, interest in the world and later independent thinking, instead of allowing these gifts to become buried. The question of the world school movement stands in close connection to the biggest question for the future of human culture, of the human spirit. But in many countries, Waldorf schools receive little or no support from the state. When the Friends of Waldorf Education was founded in Germany in 1971 to support the worldwide Waldorf movement, there were slightly more than 100 Waldorf schools – 79 in Western Europe, 17 in North America, three in Australia/New Zealand, four in South America and three in Africa. Since then, we have raised millions of euros each year to help schools, especially those in South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

Today, there are approximately 2,500 Waldorf schools and kindergartens worldwide, many supported by the Friends of Waldorf Education, which created an international help fund in 1976 to assist struggling schools.

In order to survive, the worldwide movement needs a collective consciousness; the movement would be paralyzed and wither, were it not for the interaction of people from a diverse collection of schools and

countries meeting and sharing ideas at conferences such as the 8th Annual World Teachers' Conference in March 2008 in Dornach, Switzerland.

From our Berlin office, we now have contacts all over the world and support Waldorf schools and other initiatives in more than 60 countries. We also provide individual stipends and support travel costs for mentors.


Through our newsletters and website at [www.freunde-waldorf.de](http://www.freunde-waldorf.de), we report on the Waldorf education movement, facilitate individual sponsorships to arrange advisory visits and much more. Our volunteers coordinate projects that are co-financed by the state. In our office in Karlsruhe, Germany, more than 20 co-workers organize the voluntary service programs through which young people can spend up to a year in a work placement abroad.

An essential principle is that we pass on 100 per cent of all donations, over 3 million Euros per year. All over the world, Waldorf schools and related initiatives struggle to self-finance their own operational budgets. When they encounter other expenses, even in small amounts, the costs can extend their limits. There are many emergencies in the Waldorf movement, where even modest support can represent significant aid. Just \$1,500 will furnish a new kindergarten in Beijing, China, or even construct a new classroom, purchase physics lab instruments

or subsidize travel costs for experienced mentors to visit a pioneer initiative, essential aid that often carries benefits for years into the future.

Can we see the school in the South African township or in the far and distant Tadjikistan as a "sister" or "brother" school? The German Waldorf School in Braunschweig, for example, has a partnership with a Waldorf school in Eastern Brazil. To get to know each other, the 12th class made a journey there, not only finding the money to pay for the trip, but also 20,000 euros (about \$30,000) to donate to this and other initiatives in Brazil.

Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf movement, spoke again and again of the necessity of a World-wide Education Association. "It must be possible, that no longer is the question to be raised, as to whether schools like the Waldorf schools can be established in various countries, but rather through the power of persuasion this opportunity has to be provided everywhere to a large enough proportion of people," he once said.

With these donations we can help regarding the urgent requests we got almost every day .

Holger Niederhausen  
Friends of Waldorf Education Berlin, Germany  
[berlin@freunde-waldorf.de](mailto:berlin@freunde-waldorf.de)  
Visit our webpage [www.freunde-waldorf.de](http://www.freunde-waldorf.de)

*Since 1971, Friends of Waldorf Education have raised money to support Waldorf schools around the world, including schools in Kathmandu, Nepal; Cape Town, South Africa; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Barão de Grajaú, Brazil.*

# outofbounds

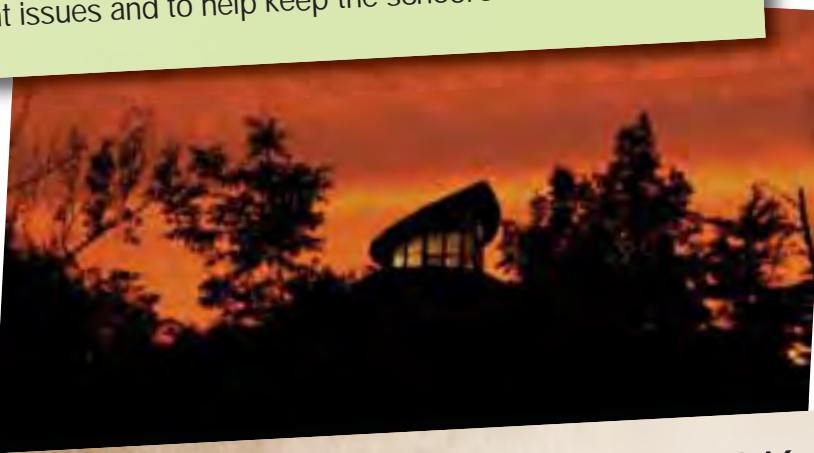
## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**outofbounds** is here for you. Your ideas, your thoughts and visions. How did you like this issue? Please let us know what you think and what you'd like to see in future issues of **your alumni magazine**.

## WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF OTOFBOUNDS.

If you'd like to interview a former classmate or teacher, write an article or suggest a story idea for **outofbounds**, please send an email with your thoughts to [outofbounds@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:outofbounds@torontowaldorfschool.com).

Alumni/ae, current and former faculty, parents and friends of TWS are welcome to make submissions. Please send in your best TWS photos, along with a brief description of their content and the name of the photographer, for possible use in subsequent issues and to help keep the school's archives complete.



## WALDORF ALUMNI/AE NETWORK

A place for 1,000 alumni/ae of Toronto Waldorf School to meet, re-connect and network through the school's website, [www.torontowaldorfschool.com](http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com), or on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/TWSAlumni-ae>

## contributors cont.

### HOLGER NIEDERHAUSEN

studied biology from 1988 to 1995, then trained as a Waldorf teacher and has been a co-worker at Friends of Waldorf Education in Berlin, Germany since 1997. In 2003, Niederhausen was a co-founder of a Waldorf kindergarten in Berlin.



**BERNARD PODOLSKI '86** After receiving a B.A. at the University of Toronto, Bernard got his first job in advertising design in Toronto. Over the years, he has worked in advertising and communications for various ad agencies and industries, including automotive, government, and fashion sectors and a long stint on Bay Street in the mutual fund industry. Feeling a little incomplete living a city life and looking to get back to his childhood passions of the mountains, skiing and *le Français*, Bernard moved to Mont-Tremblant, Quebec. Now happily ensconced in the resort town, he serves many of his clients from the quiet and natural splendour of Québec's Laurentians. When he is not working on design, Bernard is a professional snowboard instructor and enthusiast of too many sports and activities to list. His ongoing passion is to proselytize environmental marketing and alternative energy.



# Graduates of 2008, Welcome



Christopher Meek



Elliot Fromowitz



Evan Keyzer



Zachary Kay



Abhishek Krishnamoorthy



Hilary Worm



Adelin Dyon



Kirat Sekhon

... and the  
rest of the  
Class of  
2008

Keshia Brubacher  
Boris Bershadsky  
Kyle Briggs  
Trevor Cooke  
Christopher Coome  
Danielle Dehne  
Albert Fan  
Elena Favaro Viana  
Kaila Foster  
Connor Frame  
Joshua Goldfarb  
Jonah Greenberg  
Maria Hanna

Alexa Heintz  
Julie Karacsony  
Nooreen Kassam  
Christina Kowalenko  
Mark Kurolap  
Ji-Yoon Kwon  
Hyung Lee  
Vivien Lee  
Ye-Bin Lee  
Megan Levy-McLaughlin  
Lea Lewin  
Matthew Little  
Nadine Lynch

Lola Muminova  
Hannah Myers  
Maria Ribezzo  
Julia Rizzi  
Kei Roynard  
Alice Shi  
Billie Joe Thurrott  
Jacqui Weyler  
Rebecca Wylie  
Madeleine Yachnin  
Anja Zgavc  
Maayan Ziv



# to the alumni/ae community!



Duncan Ebata



Christabel Homewood



Matthew Kay



Dorothy Ordogh



Evelyn Northcott-Callier



Nicholas Nesbitt



Patrick Mallory



Tara Akitt



Inge Shukla



Leed Jackson



Sam Egan-Sheardown



# TWS Events 2009

Did you know that there are many TWS events that alumni/ae are always warmly welcome to join? Here is a listing of some that we think you might be interested in.

There's also a new calendar of events on the school's website, so please visit <http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com/events/overview> to verify dates and times before attending.

## GATEWAYS CONFERENCE – APRIL 17-18, 2009

Gateways offers workshops on various annual themes: This year's is "Play: The Genius of the Child at Work." The featured guest speaker is Joan Almon, U.S. coordinator of the Alliance for Childhood, which advocates social change for children to improve their overall health and well-being.

## TWS 40TH ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY OPEN DAY REUNION FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009

This "Open Day" reunion will focus on the children, our program and our history. The entire building will be animated with a range of activities suitable for most ages, including a special Mayfest celebration at 2 p.m.

## CLASS OF 1989 20-YEAR REUNION SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2009

Get ready, '89ers, it's your turn! We'll be sending out a reunion registration package with all the details soon. Contact Sara Anderson at [sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com) if you'd like to help organize your event.

The following are a preview of the school's upcoming events for the 2009-2010 school year. please confirm dates and times on our website.

## CANDLELIGHT FAIR

An annual favourite for the school and its extended family. There are many vendors presenting their wares in a market setting. A sitting area welcomes social gatherings and a sheltered children's corner invites kids to play and draw. Please come in, browse, enjoy a snack and the festive atmosphere with old friends.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FALL 2009

Come and get an update on the major highlights of the year past and a look ahead at the plans and priorities for the upcoming few years. Starts at 7:30 p.m.

## ADVENT ASSEMBLIES IN THE FORUM DECEMBER 2009

Do you remember the wreath in the Forum and walking back to Main Lesson in the quiet darkness? Come and represent the alumni/ae in the advent spiral.

## GRADE 12 PLAY

A great night out! Please check our website for dates and times. Spaces are limited to this popular event

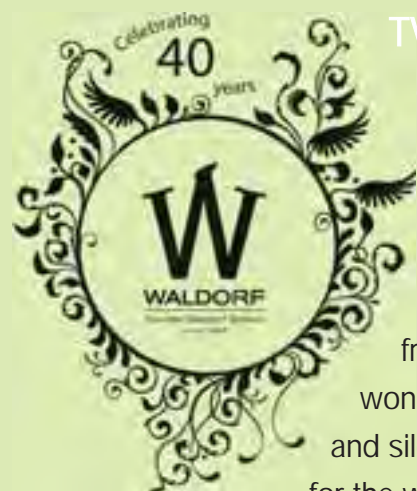
## TWS OPEN HOUSES AND "TALK AND TOURS"

Come and see how the school has changed (or not) since you last roamed the halls. Visit the Alumni/ae Orchard, next to the chicken house behind the soccer field, to see how our apple trees are coming along. Tell them to grow and bear fruit while you're there.

*Sara Anderson, Alumni/ae Coordinator*  
[sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com)

## GRADE 12 GRADUATION – FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2009

All alumni/ae welcome! Two 1989 representatives will welcome the grads into the alumni/ae community. Prepare to be transported back to your own grad; you might want to bring a few tissues.



## TWS 40TH ANNIVERSARY GALA FUNDRAISER SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2009

This special evening will take place at the **Richmond Hill Golf & Country Club** (across the street from the school) and will feature wonderful food, entertainment, a live and silent auction as well as an opportunity for the wider TWS community to come together to mark this milestone. We hope to see you and your parents at this event.

Bringing Spirit to Life

Explorations in  
Anthroposophy

Foundation  
Studies

Waldorf Teacher  
Education

Biodynamic  
Agriculture

Rudolf Steiner Centre  
Toronto

905-764-7570

www.rsct.ca

## contributors cont.

**PATTI POWELL** has been teaching drama and directing productions at TWS since early 2007. She is a professional theatre director who has taught at York University, Soulpepper Youth Outreach and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, England. She has a BA in Performing Arts in Theatre and Dance. Just prior to joining TWS, she co-directed and choreographed the *Three Penny Opera* with Soulpepper Theatre Company. Patti has been a long-time Waldorf parent at TWS and at Alan Howard Waldorf School. Her youngest son is currently in the TWS High School; another son is a recent graduate. In addition to the usual participation as a parent, she has been involved in Waldorf school productions for over 20 years.



**GRAEME STEWART-WILSON '07** recently returned to Canada after spending a year travelling throughout South America. He is currently working in order to finance his past and future travels. Next September, he plans to begin studies in a Canadian university where he can use his experiences abroad to further his learning and understanding of the world and of himself. He hopes to remain in contact with the people and projects he became acquainted with in his travels and to support them in any way he can.



**ANNA PURCELL '91** is currently a pan-Canadian nomad who makes her home on both coasts, and regularly visits people in between. She buys things, sells things, and makes things, sometimes yummy or pretty. She collects good stories and interesting information. She aspires to be a human paper-clip.

**TODD ROYER** has a B.A. from Taylor University in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. He is a graduate of the Waldorf Teacher Education program at the Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto and completed the Waldorf Collaborative Leadership program in 2006. Todd has taught at the Toronto Waldorf School since 1998 and has served as faculty chair since 2003. He enjoys playing music, woodworking and dreaming about building a straw bale house. [troyer@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:troyer@torontowaldorfschool.com)



**ASHLEY TAYLOR '01** graduated from TWS in 2001 and completed an undergraduate degree in Contemporary Studies and Philosophy at the University of King's College in Halifax. After graduating, she moved back to Toronto and worked as an Employment Counsellor to people with disabilities for two years. In September she moved slightly south to begin work on her PhD in Disability Studies and Philosophy of Education at Syracuse University in Central New York State.





*inbounds*