

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

7

2009/10

# TURNING 40 & COUNTING!

*TWS reaches out to you and the world beyond its doors*



# outofbounds

CAN \$18





Katja in Grade 2, 1974



**Katja Rudolph '84** attended TWS from Grade 2 to 12, after immigrating to Canada from England with her family. After graduating, she travelled for a year in Europe and Canada and then completed a BA in cultural studies and political science at Trent University. She moved to England to do her master's in social and political science at King's College, Cambridge. After a two year break during which she worked and traveled to India, she began her PhD in the Theory and Policy Studies in Education Department at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral work developed a theoretical argument for a post-liberal choosing subject and the socialization of choice in education (an anti-privitization choice model) by deconstructing liberal accounts of subjectivity, agency, choice, and the welfare state. She received her degree in 1999. She is now a fiction writer working on her third book. She also writes screenplays. She lives in Toronto.

**Front cover: TWS's Birthday Cake - 40th Anniversary Assembly, May 1st, 2009**  
Left to right, at time photo was taken: Jasper Dhanraj, Gr 6; Kevin Moynagh, Parent Circle Chair; Bernadette Moynagh, Gr 4; Catherine Daugherty, Development Officer; Bill Harlow, Board Chair; Lilah Tersigni, Gr 3; Helene Gross, High School Chair; Rebecca Selin, Gr 10; Michele Andrews, Administrative Director; Patti Wolfe, Early Childhood Chair; Sara Anderson, Alumni/ae Coordinator

# 2009/2010 editorial outofbounds edition 7

Yes, I'm back. For this edition, at least. This is the nature of the Waldorf community: *You can never leave! (Be afraid, be very afraid!)* No, speaking seriously, for various reasons it has made sense for both the school and for me that I reprise my role of editor/designer for this edition. And I have to say, it has been as fun and rewarding as always because I get to meet so many fine TWS alumni/ae, faculty/staff, parents, and other community members. And, as of this year, we are rolling out an advertising and sponsorship program that will give alumni/ae, community members, and like-minded individuals and businesses outside the Waldorf community the opportunity to participate in and support our magazine. The need to raise funds for this edition accounts for the delay in publication. A big thank you to all of you who pitched in and contributed so generously!

In the Waldorf curriculum, house building is taught in grade three. Students learn about all the different kinds of houses that are built the world over using local materials and technology, as well as local geographic advantages. They also learn about all the reasons it's so important to have a house to live in. Well, we're doing the same in a manner of speaking with this magazine and our alumni/ae program. We're building a house using all the resources available to us. What is the point of this house? Like all houses: shelter, warmth, and a place to come back to after adventures in the world. It's a place to rest and rejuvenate, to nourish body and soul, to tell each other stories about our various activities, goals and dreams, to contemplate together the purpose of life, to offer advice and comfort, to welcome and nurture new generations. All houses need strong foundations so that they endure into the future. Let's make sure ours has a strong foundation. ■

*katjarudolph@aol.com*



House building in grade three



outofbounds alumni/ae features writers: left to right: Declan O'Driscoll '93, Katherine Dynes '84, Anna Purcell '91, Nils Junge '88

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**Publisher:**  
Toronto Waldorf School  
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# welcome to outofbounds 7!

by **Susan Digby**

*handwork teacher & lower school faculty chair*

Susan attended SEED, Toronto, Class of 1984



Welcome to the worldwide celebration of the ninetieth year of Waldorf education! For ninety years, Waldorf education has reached from teachers through their students out into the world. As the theme of this issue of *outofbounds* is outreach, I would like to reflect from my perspective as a TWS teacher on some of the ways this education supports our students as they reach out into the world.

First, our school itself is increasingly building a presence by reaching out to the local community. Just as the suburban community has been growing right up to meet our campus, we are taking steps to reach out. We are building our relationship with our neighbour, the As-Sadiq Islamic School and its community, whose students have joined one of our weekly lower school assemblies. The Village Market and Hesperus expansions demonstrate our community reaching out with sister organizations to meet the needs of others in York Region.

Second, while our school itself is guided by the spirit of outreach, from a teacher's perspective our goal is to support our students in reaching beyond themselves. How do children grow from the first steps of reaching for the hand of the teacher, through reaching out as ambassadors in high school practicums and social services projects, to bringing their passions as gifts to the world?

In main lesson, our children begin each day by speaking and singing together. The chorus is shared and does not belong to the individual. However, this collective activity can be creative and transformative. The moment comes when students are ready to take to the stage alone, to express their own voices. They are being prepared to reach out and live and work with others.

In the classroom, students encounter themselves, their peers, their studies and the world. In my teaching subject, the material arts, the students experience the limitations and possibilities of natural elements. The grain of the wood, the fibre of the cloth, the way the metal flows when heated...

all these pose questions to be explored. By working with different materials, students learn to appreciate how the material can direct the design. As they appreciate the material, love develops. One learns to love the world and learns to work with its natural limitations and possibilities.

This brush with nature reminds me of the wisdom of Dr. David Suzuki who, for all the accolades he has received for his television work, is a big advocate of children unplugging and experiencing the natural world. He cautions that our love of nature (biophilia) can be undermined by hours of sedentary interaction with screens (videophilia). His exhortation? "Put away all your electronic gizmos and go outside. Lie under a tree. Watch the clouds. Smell the air. Enjoy real life, rather than a virtual version of it."<sup>1</sup>

When you love the world, fear subsides. You become someone who can reach out into the world without fear through the interests you've developed through experience.

As teachers, we hope that alumni/ae have been supported by their education at TWS in their encounter with the world, in reaching beyond its limitations to love and serve within the realm of possibility. We see this in those alumni/ae who have joined the faculty. The arrival of Jonathan Snow '95 to teach Eurythmy means that we currently have five TWS alumni/ae on our staff (Greg Scott '85, Natalie Semenov '86, Lucas Sorbara '88, and Rachel Aide '92). Their love of this education now supports a new generation.

As an organization, TWS is also continually developing itself. Sometimes inspired, sometimes less so, we carry our interests and aspirations out into the world. We strive to give rather than to grasp. As we travel our path of development, we make mistakes and learn along the way. In so doing, we deepen our roots in the wider community. This will nourish us as we grow.

As you read the profiles in *outofbounds* 7, I hope you reflect on how we are all called to reach beyond our limitations to our possibilities and thereby to be, radically, ourselves! ■ [sdigby@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:sdigby@torontowaldorfschool.com)

<sup>1</sup> [www.davidsusuki.org](http://www.davidsusuki.org), "Reality TV: The Closest some Children get to Reality," July 28, 2006

# alumni/ae news

by **Sara Anderson '85**

*alumni/ae coordinator*



The 2008/09 year was an exciting one for the school, with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations at the forefront. The festivities opened and closed the month of May '09 and raised over \$34,000 in tuition adjustment funds.

The Open House on May 1<sup>st</sup> featured an oral history of the school as told through the personal stories of the teachers and a festive showcase of student talent in song, music and dance. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, the school community celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in style at the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club with silent and live auctions, sit down dinner and live music from our own alumni/ae musicians.

In June 2009, the Class of 1989 came together to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their graduation from TWS. Class teacher Gary Kobran and advisor Bob Pickering addressed the class, their families and parents, a total of forty-three attendees. Jo Russell and Josh Rubin, at the grade twelve graduation the evening prior, welcomed the Class of 2009 into the alumni/ae fold on our behalf.

In June 2010, we will welcome the Class of 1990 back to the school to take their own walk down memory lane and this year we would like to extend a formal invitation to the parents of the class to join their children at their 20 Year Reunion. To make registration more efficient, we plan to have on-line registration up and running for this year's event.

Another way in which we are looking to expand the reunion weekend is to possibly include an open family picnic on the school grounds. Please send us your ideas about how we can include more multi-generational alumni/ae and family-friendly events to piggyback off this reunion weekend. We welcome your inspiration!

Lastly, we are only looking for seven more energetic, social, and networked alumni/ae to take on the role of contact person (or people!) for their class. Please check the alumni/ae pages of the school's website to see which years are in need and let me know if you would like to take on this simple role.

Contact me with news to post on our alumni/ae pages, with ideas for alumni/ae programming and to simply keep in touch. I look forward to hearing from you. ■ [sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:sanderson@torontowaldorfschool.com)



Those were the days, my friend...Courtesy of TWS archive







Above left to right: Melanie Lemieux, Keith McTaggart, Michelle Lonergan, Josh Rubin, Marianne Conder, Jeff Cowan, Katrina Muncie, Eric Rominger, Joanna Russell, Michael Paul, Alison Urquhart, Allen Shen



## TWS Faculty and Staff

### FACULTY/STAFF LEAVING JUNE 2009

Sue Martin - Elderberry Nursery Teacher, from sabbatical  
 Jeanne Rose - Interim Elderberry Nursery Teacher  
 Bruce McKenzie - Lower School Intern then Grade 6 Class Teacher (with Todd Royer)  
 Maria Helms - Eurythmy Teacher  
 Stan Cyprys - Orchestra Teacher

### FACULTY/STAFF JOINING SEPTEMBER & MID-TERM 2009

Jonathan Snow - Eurythmy Teacher  
 Sandra Startup - Grade 7 Class Teacher  
 Helen Rushlow - Afternoon Forget-me-not Kindergarten  
 Lorran Wild - Afternoon Aspen Nursery Teacher  
 Andrea McKenzie - Aspen Nursery Teacher  
 Tony Browning - Orchestra

### FACULTY/STAFF GOING ON SABBATICAL 2009/10

Les Black - Lower School Class Teacher & Lower School Chair

### FACULTY/STAFF CHANGING POSITIONS SEPT 2009

Todd Royer from Faculty Chair and Grade 6 Class Teacher (with Bruce McKenzie) to Grade 1 Class Teacher  
 Lea Philpott from Afternoon Kindergarten to Parent & Tot  
 Susan Digby takes on Lower School Chair  
 Natalie Semenov from part-time to full-time Financial Analyst  
 Heather Church from Birchgrove Kindergarten to Forget-me-not Kindergarten  
 Mary Mitchell from Aspen Kindergarten to Birchgrove Kindergarten

2009/10 YEAR  
 Class teachers: Gr 1 Todd Royer, Gr 2 Kate Anthony, Gr 3 Mascha Perrone, Gr 4 Kathryn Humphrey, Gr 5 D'Arcy Colby, Gr 6 Eleonora Ebata, Gr 7 Sandra Startup, Gr 8 Elyse Pomeranz

## 20 Year Reunion class of '89

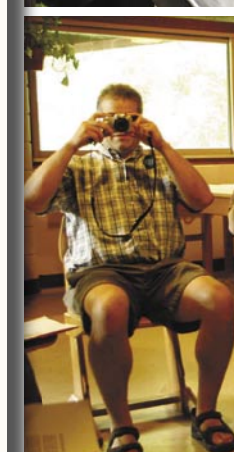
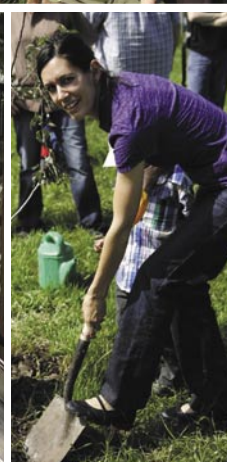
by Eric Rominger '89  
 rominger@rogers.com

Over a year ago, I was pondering the reality that twenty years had passed since my time at TWS. Feeling somewhat old, or shall we say "experienced," I thought it might be high time for us to have a get together. Thinking realistically, I was pretty sure it wasn't going to be me organizing it, but I knew Josh Rubin might. Well, lo and behold, that's exactly what happened. Little did I know that 20 Year Reunions had been happening for a while now at TWS. Josh, in unison with the alumni/ae coordinator and committee, put together a great event for us in June of 2009.

We first met on Friday night at a pub for some drinks and an opportunity to reacquire and break the ice. This was probably the strangest part of the whole experience: I mean, boy, have we all changed! It was fun to catch up and reminisce, fill in the blanks and patch our memories together while thinking of past events. At one point, Josh and Joanna Russell had to leave for a while to make a presentation to the 2009 graduates at their grade twelve graduation, but we kept things going until well after they returned.

The next day started the more formal part of the reunion, where we all met at the school. Present faculty and former faculty were the Rudolfs, Renate Krause, Helene Gross, Patti Wolfe, our grade school teacher Gary Kobran, and our high school class advisors Bob Pickering and Susan McLeod. Present staff were Catherine Daugherty and Sara Anderson. Some introductory talks were given by Gary and Bob, followed by a tour of the school and grounds. It was nice to see the old stomping ground as well as the progress and changes that have taken place. Next came the group circle facilitated by Helga Rudolph. This is where we affirmed our current lives, kind of the inverse of what we had done in grade twelve when we affirmed each other. This was a happy reminder of the more in-depth nature of the Waldorf pedagogy. We finished off with a ceremonial planting of a tree in the alumni/ae orchard. Later in the evening, we met for dinner and drinks, having more opportunity to connect with each other. This is where we realized that the annual class trips are what produced the most memories and stories. On Sunday morning, Josh hosted a pot luck brunch at his place, which I'm sure was lovely but I was unable to attend.

As I let the reunion experience sink in, I'm realizing how truly meaningful it was to see everyone again, including faculty, and to revisit the whole Waldorf experience. Although I didn't think about it much during my time at TWS, the exposure to this unique philosophy of personal development and child-centred education clearly planted some seeds that have impacted my life in important ways. It felt a bit like coming home. ■



The next generation...

Photos courtesy of Allen Shen '89 and Michael Paul '89



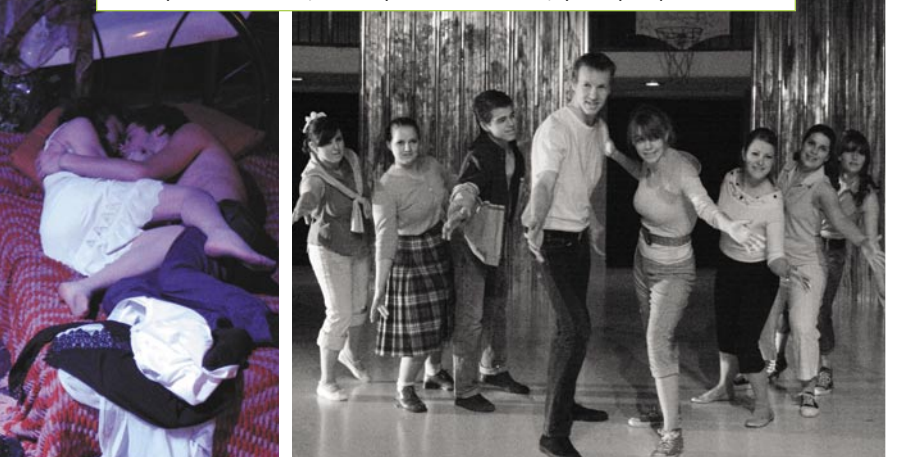




# TWS news



Class of 2009's Grade 12 play **West Side Story** directed by Patti Powell  
book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim



8 outofbounds Photos by Lucas Sorbara '88, TWS High School Teacher, and Ryan Lindsay, TWS Marketing

## TWSreaches out

by *Ryan Lindsay, Marketing* [rlindsay@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:rlindsay@torontowaldorfschool.com)

In the 2009/10 school year, two-thousand five hundred schools and kindergartens in over eighty countries are celebrating ninety years of Waldorf education. As you read through the pages of this magazine, remarking on how our alumni/ae have left TWS and manifested positive change in the world, multiply that effect by two-thousand five hundred. What a gift Waldorf education has been to our fragile world!

Yet we cannot rest on our laurels: we need to move forward with the momentum of the times and continue to be leaders. TWS is doing its part to continue pushing the envelope of progressive education.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2008/09 SCHOOL YEAR

Grade twelve, with generous assistance from parents, friends, staff, and alumni/ae, produced Winterpalooza, a musical fundraising extravaganza largely featuring alumni/ae acts and even a catered VIP section. Proceeds from the event helped to send the class to the Connect Conference in Dornach, Switzerland, where they addressed issues of global significance with graduating Waldorf students from around the globe.

In March 2009, the Gateways Conference, featuring Joan Almon, coordinator of the US branch of Alliance of Childhood, packed the forum for the fifteenth year in a row.

The high school Eurythmy class went on tour in the spring, performing at Waldorf schools in Ontario and New York State.

The TWS community mourned the death of Jay McKenzie, an alumnus who left the school after grade eight. He was a member of the Class of 2009. A student well-loved by TWS students, faculty, and staff, Jay's death brought us all together in celebration of his life and demonstrated the power of community.

Students, staff, and parents, past and present, packed the gymnasium for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open Day assembly. Long-time teachers painted a moving picture of the school's past four decades, and outgoing Faculty Chair, Todd Royer, presented an inspiring vision of the past and future of Waldorf education. Members of grades five through twelve formed a cohesive orchestra that roused the crowd.

Over one hundred and sixty alumni/ae, parents and staff, past and present, attended the gala and auction. Together we raised over \$34,000 for the school. Dancing to the gorgeous music of talented alumni/ae Paul Neufeld and Layah Jane (and their bands) followed the fundraising.

A graduating grade twelve student achieved the highest mark ever scored in a University of British Columbia placement test for French language studies.

TWS was awarded the Vaughan Environmental Achievement award for the fourth year in a row, recognizing us as the greenest school in the municipality because of our integration of the physical campus into the curriculum, community involvement, environmental awareness and school yard greening efforts.

Over this past summer, the high school math/computer lab was moved, renovated, outfitted, and networked with new Mac desktops. The equipment and set-up were donated by parents and friends of the school. Students will also be able to use the facility for research purposes during their non-class time.

For the current school year, the Early Childhood faculty added the Playgroup Program as well as full-day and five-day nursery programs.



### REACHING OUT AND RETURNING HOME

To continue pushing the envelope, members of the TWS administration usually attend the summer Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) conference to connect with the broader movement and gain new insights into the curriculum and organizational best practices. We bring back to TWS what we glean from other schools and educators, even from those working beyond North America. This reaching out and returning home with a renewed sense of purpose and clarity is one way we ensure our school continues to grow and develop from one year to the next.

What particularly inspired me at the conference this past summer is the effective way in which current and former parents and students can also help schools by reaching out and returning home. Much of our school's outreach

is naturally accomplished by sending alumni/ae into the world after graduation. Telling the world about your experiences at TWS brings the school to the world in the most vivid, engaging way possible. We welcome the friends and family members, colleagues and business connections, resources (money, gifts-in-kind, services, etc.) and like-minded organizations that your words attract to the school, making TWS's circle a larger, more diverse community in which our students can grow and learn.

TWS has worked hard over the past few years to craft a language and an image of the school that makes it easier for people to communicate its essence and practices to others. This is part of our outreach strategy. Our website, brochures, and other materials explain this education in everyday terms, breaking it down into memorable phrases and digestible pieces of information that anyone can share and anyone can understand.

What makes this work successful, however, is when friends of the school convey to their friends, family, and colleagues out in the world a specific sense of how Waldorf education has helped their child, improved their family or spiritual life, or simply made them feel genuinely good about sending their child to school each day. Your feelings about this education, when shared through words with people who respect you, does more for it than anything an administrator can do: it ensures that your child knows you appreciate the education as much as he or she does; it inspires those who are important to you to be generous with their energy and money and know it's for a great cause; it gives people ideas about who in their circle might be attracted to what we're doing here at TWS.

*Word of mouth is the best form of marketing. We've worked hard on the words. You are our voice. So this is a very simple and humble request: please be a TWS ambassador.*

When speaking with your family, friends, and colleagues, pass on the stories you read here in *outofbounds*, our newsletter, website, and brochures, as well as experiences you have had at alumni/ae reunions, the Candlelight Fair, and other TWS events.

We also encourage you to bring guests to our open houses and community events (Candlelight Fair, alumni/ae panel, guest speakers, etc). And we're always happy to arrange a tour for you, allowing you to revisit the school and to show the people you care about the place and people that had an impact on your life.

If you know of people who support worthwhile causes with substantial donations, convey to them that giving to a school such as TWS—the mandate of which is to cultivate in students the capacity for independent thought, an engaged, compassionate heart, and the will to make things happen in the world—ensures that their generosity, and yours, lasts for generations and has a concrete and wide-ranging impact on the world. ■

## TWS EVENTS 09/10

Alumni/ae, you are always welcome to attend TWS events: Go to [www.torontowaldorfschool.com](http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com) to see the schedule or call/e-mail: 905.881.1611 [general@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:general@torontowaldorfschool.com)

### VISIT THE RUDOLF STEINER CENTRE

Located in TWS's Arts and Sports Wing, it offers adult development and Waldorf teacher education programs. Alumni/ae very welcome. For schedule information go to [www.rsct.ca](http://www.rsct.ca), or call/e-mail: 905.764.7570 [info@rsct.ca](mailto:info@rsct.ca)



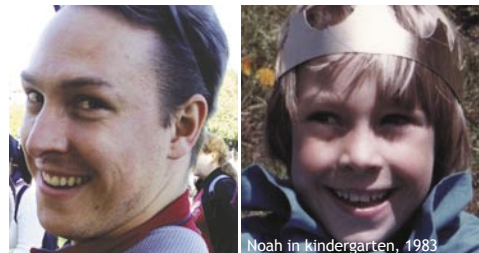
Hundreds of volunteer hours have been dedicated to this magazine - many thanks to the

# contributors



Sara in Grade 1, 1973

Toronto Waldorf School Alumni/ae Coordinator, wife, and mother of three, **Sara Anderson '85** also works for LEAP (Language Education for Accounting Professionals), teaching ESL classes and developing curriculum for a new on-line learning program. In her spare time between laundry loads, she secretly snacks on cookie dough, feeds her addiction to Facebook and plays Scrabble with other on-line addicts. Her husband and TWS high school sweetheart, "Dan the Fireman" Jaciw '83, have been married for fourteen years, but have been together for over twenty. Their brood, April, Ruby, and Jasper, attend the Alan Howard Waldorf School in downtown Toronto. And now, for a Toronto Waldorf School Alumni/ae Trivia Question: who has been April's new grade five teacher this school year at the Alan Howard Waldorf School? Hint: it's a TWS alumnus.



Noah in kindergarten, 1983

**Noah Black '96** was born in the small paper-mill town of Fort Francis in north-western Ontario in 1978. He and his family moved down to Toronto when he was seven where soon after he began his attendance at the Toronto Waldorf School from kindergarten through to Grade 13. Noah graduated Grade 12 in 1996. After doing the "Europe travel thing", working in the trades, a stint of volunteering in Camphill and with a bachelor's degree under his belt, Noah decided that one bachelor's degree wasn't enough and working for charity in Camphill was the thing to do! Six years and two bachelor degrees later, Noah lives with his wife and young son in a Camphill specialist college and works as a care house manager for one of the residential units.

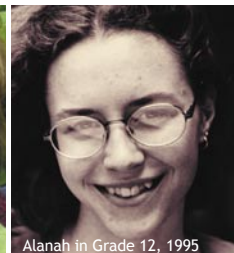


Class of 1979  
Don Mills Collegiate, Toronto



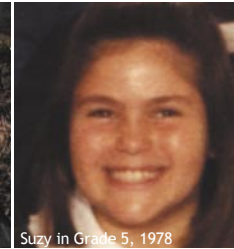
Kate in Grade 5, 1972

**Kate Anthony, TWS class teacher**, grew up in Don Mills, Toronto, wanting to be an artist. She graduated from Don Mills Collegiate in 1979 and went on to do a four year degree at the Ontario College of Art. She then embarked on a twenty-two year career in advertising, creating campaigns for national and international clients. She was introduced to Waldorf education when she watched her then partner's daughter blossom once she began attending the Alan Howard Waldorf School. When Kate was "liberated" from her advertising job, becoming a Waldorf teacher was high on the list of new careers to pursue. After attending the Rudolf Steiner Centre teacher education program, and interning at TWS for a year, Kate happily joined the TWS faculty, taking on a grade one class. She has finally achieved her goal of being an artist, since Waldorf teachers know that education is an art.



Alanah in Grade 12, 1995

**Alanah Caron '95** grew up in King City, Ontario, on an organic farm. She attended TWS from kindergarten through OAC. She then spent several years in Toronto apprenticing as a chef before living and working in Belize, Hawai'i, and Dominica. There she studied tropical horticulture, native wild foods, nutrition and local-based food preparation in remote and isolated locations, and worked in a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program as a member of an intentional community. Alanah then returned to Canada where she spent a year working at TWS as a kindergarten assistant. She moved to Cortes Island, BC, in 2008. Currently, she is raising her two sons there and is a founding member of an innovative year-round agricultural and housing co-op.



Suzy in Grade 5, 1978

**Suzy Bazzana (Smith) '85** is the proud mother of three children, Ryan, Sarah, and Adam, and wife to Tom. She is a self-employed homemaker. Her company is Stingray Specialties, which specializes in "ad specialties, premiums, and promotions." She volunteers in every capacity when it comes to her children and school, from fundraising, to school council, to hot lunches, and school trips. She also volunteers with their extra curricular sporting teams. When Suzy left TWS, she attended Trafalgar Castle Boarding School (the former Ontario Ladies College in Whitby). There she was head of the athletic association and broke the school record in track and field for shot put and the 100m run. At the end of Grade 12, she was honoured with the "Strathcona Award" for all around excellence. After school, she held a number of jobs in various fields, always as the president's assistant. Her last and most enjoyable job before becoming a mother was at Firefly Books.



Class of 1965  
Rudolf Steiner School, NYC



Charlotte in Grade 12, 1965

**Charlotte Chambers** is a Waldorf teacher, biodynamic farmer, and fine arts major from U of Wis. She attended the Munich Waldorf School and Rudolf Steiner School, Manhattan, for her high school years, and returned to New York City to study Eurythmy and Waldorf teacher training. Between '75 and '79 she was a class teacher and art instructor at TWS. After working in resort hospitality and hotel management for Blue Mountain Resorts, she decided to return to the family dairy. Half a year later, she met her future husband Alexander B. Moffat. Together they promoted on-the-farm education, art, and life skills. When he was diagnosed with a brain tumour in '96, Charlotte became his caregiver until his death in '98. She continues to work with the land as farmer and educator. She carries a vision of a world community centre for agriculture, arts and therapy, environmental sciences and education. contributors cont'd page 16

# TWS'S 40th anniversary celebrations



Photos by Ryan Lindsay, TWS Marketing

Students, faculty, staff and parents, past and present, packed the gymnasium for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open Day assembly on May 1st, 2009. Long-time teachers painted a moving picture of the school's past four decades, and outgoing Faculty Chair, Todd Royer, presented an inspiring vision of the past and future of Waldorf education. Members of grades five through twelve formed a cohesive orchestra that roused the crowd. And over one hundred and sixty alumni/ae, parents, and staff, past and present, attended the gala and auction. Together we raised over \$34,000 for the school. Dancing to the gorgeous music of talented alumni/ae Paul Neufeld and Layah Jane (and their bands) followed the fundraising.





## IN MEMORIAM

### *Aedsgard Koekebakker* 1933-1991

*by Elaine Grech (Smedley) '79*  
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Aedsgard Koekebakker was born in Zeist, Holland, in 1933. His mother, Elisabeth Lebret, was a musician and his father a journalist. He attended a Waldorf school until grade eight, despite the war being in full swing and Holland a German-occupied country. Times must have been frightening and extremely difficult. His father was a war journalist and away from home, so Aedsgard and his brother were raised mostly by their mother.

When Aedsgard was a teenager, he decided that following a traditional career path was not for him. He also had a fraught relationship with his father, and this in combination with being temperamentally strong-willed resulted in him being sent off to a biodynamic farming school. He completed his studies and was ready to put his knowledge into practice, but the prospect of a future in Holland was bleak. So upon the advice of his father, he left for Canada. It was 1955.

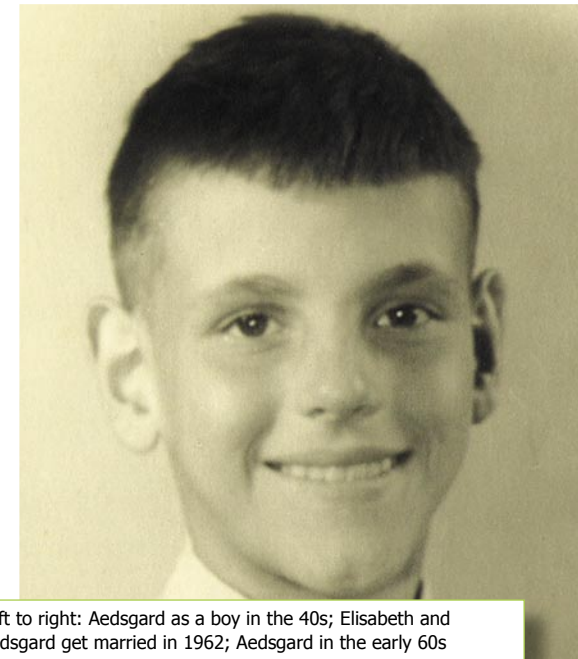
Of course, biodynamic farming in Canada at that time was almost unheard of so he made a living doing a variety of jobs. He landed a job with the CPR and worked in several western locations such as Banff and Lake Louise as a gardener for CP hotels.

It was soon time to head back to Toronto, however, because Aedsgard was ready for a new phase in his life: marriage. In 1962, he married his childhood friend Elisabeth, who had come from Holland to be with him. And he was also ready for a new challenge: teachers' college.

Aedsgard began his teaching career at Dallington Public School, where he also found another calling as a roving minstrel teaching teachers how to play the recorder. Aedsgard had brought the gift of recorder playing to his students at Dallington, and other teachers wanted to learn to do the same. Aedsgard had grown up with music. He played flute and recorder from an early age, and his mother was a master pianist (she accompanied TWS Eurythmy classes for years). Not only that, but his new wife, Elisabeth, was also a musician. Music was in his soul, and he incorporated it into his life as much as possible.

After more studies, in mathematics at the University of Western in London, Ontario, Aedsgard went on to teach high school, a career he stayed with until 1971. During this time, he and Elisabeth became parents to Mary Anne and then, two years later, to Alexander. For the first several years Aedsgard enjoyed teaching the older students, but as time went on it became more difficult for him. Aedsgard had always been hard on himself, and therefore could be hard on others as well; but despite his determination, he knew he was not reaching some of his students. There was a new attitude in the air, it was the 60s after all, and he felt helpless and frustrated by the behaviour of some of the students and the growing

Back then the school was located in St. Patrick's Church on Lillian Street in Willowdale. Alan Howard was getting on in age (although he never revealed quite how old he was!) and was ready to retire. In this letter to Aedsgard, he stated his intentions, but also asked a question: would Aedsgard continue in his place as the class teacher of grade six? Wise old Alan Howard knew Aedsgard would be a perfect replacement; he would not hand his class over to someone in whom he did not believe. His many years of experience as a teacher, together with his background in Waldorf education, made Aedsgard the perfect candidate. And Aedsgard was young, energetic, and



Left to right: Aedsgard as a boy in the 40s; Elisabeth and Aedsgard get married in 1962; Aedsgard in the early 60s



interest in drugs. He wasn't naturally one of those warm and approachable teachers, despite his high energy and creativity. He sometimes had an aloof air about him, and seemed somewhat elusive, mysterious even, as a person. Aedsgard related well to those who shared the same interests as he did, who viewed the world as he did. As time went by, he found that he had less and less in common with his students.

He decided a change was needed. Elisabeth was now a teacher at the newly formed Toronto Waldorf School, where their daughter Mary Anne (Class of '82) and son Alexander (Class of '84) went to school. Their life was slowly but surely being drawn back to the Waldorf community. Rudolf Steiner's teachings had finally taken a foothold in Canada. The next step was to fully immerse themselves in the philosophy by moving to England to attend Emerson College for a year, a college for anthroposophical studies and teacher education.

Teaching again was not on the agenda for Aedsgard. He wanted to immerse himself in other anthroposophically-inspired endeavours, but the universe sometimes has plans of its own. While in England, Aedsgard received a letter from Alan Howard, my class teacher at the time at TWS.

quite capable of taking on a bunch of increasingly independent and questioning twelve year olds.

In the letter, Alan asked for Aedsgard to think about the request for a while, and stated that a written answer was not required: just send a card with a green (yes) or red (no) dot on it. After much contemplation, justifiable for such a serious endeavour, Aedsgard chose a new path for himself and his family: he sent a green dot.

Thinking back, I wonder if he really knew what he was getting into. Aedsgard had agreed to take over a class of the renowned Alan Howard, and the first class of the only Canadian Waldorf school. Our class was setting the precedent for all others that followed. What an incredibly daunting task! The pressure must have been enormous, and there was a chance that he would not meet everyone's expectations. But Aedsgard was a strong-willed Dutchman who had faced many challenges throughout his life and wasn't ready to turn down one now, especially when Alan Howard, whom Aedsgard respected greatly, had such faith in his abilities.

So Aedsgard began his journey into the wild world of Waldorf





Top: the Class of 79 graduates from Grade 8 in 1975  
Bottom: singing with Elisabeth Koekebakker

teaching with a class of seventeen children, me included. This was the largest class size for us since we

began in grade two with three students. Mr. Koekebakker, as he was known to us, or more affectionately “Mr. K,” was a great teacher. As I have mentioned, he was very gifted in music, playing the flute very well and instilling a love of the instrument in me—so much so, that I finally learned how to play it myself, albeit long after I graduated. He was also a great math and science teacher. Mr K’s math classes resonated most with me. Perhaps this was because he was able to make mathematics tangible. He was also creative and enjoyed working with his hands. Aedsgard was a ‘doing’ kind of man as opposed to a thinker and he enjoyed it when the class was ‘doing’ also.

An excellent craftsman made for an excellent woodwork teacher. One year the project was to make a stool using a chisel to shape all components. Mr. K took advantage of the fact that there was some extra wood lying around the school (still at the time a bit of a construction site), deciding that it would be perfect for our stool project. The wood was maple, and it made good stools alright, but that was the longest woodworking project on which we ever toiled. And I think my stool is indestructible; my parents still use it around the house.

I recall going on field trips with him; unfortunately for the life of me I can’t remember where we went. But I do remember the form of transportation: it was parents’ cars and his blue pickup truck, for which he had built a cover over the truck bed. Inside the back of the truck he had constructed two wooden benches over the wheel wells. This was where we sat; he could probably fit half of the class in there! And of course, back then there weren’t any seatbelts. It was a bumpy ride, and we had to hang on, but we survived and had a lot of fun. As we drove we would often sing, “Koekebakker sits in the old gum tree...”

One of our favourite classes with Mr. K was gym. After we moved into the new building on Bathurst Street in grade seven, we had a real gym as opposed to a church basement with a low ceiling. We became volleyball fanatics. If I

AEDSGARD KOEKEBAKKER con’t from page 13

remember correctly, playing volleyball was all we did in gym class. We became quite good at it, too. Mr. K talked about arranging for us to play another school. Alas, that was before TWS participated in local leagues, and arranging something like that was a major undertaking, so we continued to make as many new teams as we could with seventeen students.

I particularly recall a physics main lesson block, one involving levers and pulleys. For this lesson Mr. K constructed the school’s first set of pulleys so that we could observe how the physics worked. This was wonderful, because we experienced the concept in the concrete while at the same time learning the mathematical formulas. I clearly remember the moment it all clicked in my mind.

Mr. K was fond of the pulley lesson also and, using his Waldorf-honed creativity, went on to put it to poetry, so to speak. We were learning a poem called “King Bruce and the Spider.” The poem talks about a King Bruce of Scotland, who was in deep despair because he was not able to do a great deed for his kingdom. He was ready to “give it all up” when a spider dropped in front of him.

King Bruce watched as it persevered, with several failed attempts, to climb all the way to the top of the domed ceiling. Watching the spider achieve this great feat made the king realize he could do the same.

We were to perform this poem for the school and parents, but we wanted to make it as real as possible. The spider actor was chosen: Mark Cryns, the gymnast in our class. Using the pulleys, which were attached to the ceiling of the gym, some of us hauled Mark up and down to represent the spider’s efforts. And, while we pulled, we recited. The audience loved it! It was a poem we would never forget; there are in fact some students who are able to recite it to this day!

Mr. K was always able to integrate activity into our classes, such as building something or going outside. This is what made him a quintessential Waldorf teacher. He also liked to have fun. I was reminded just recently of when the class found an old stone fireplace with a tall chimney in the woods by the pond. We decided that we would have to use it somehow. So for lunch one day we cooked a big pot of baked beans in it. It was marvellous; we all went back to classes singing the infamous beans song.

One spring, Mr. K’s favourite thing to do was to walk to a field of winter wheat nearby. We carefully monitored the growth of the wheat from the time it was planted until school ended that year. I am not sure what we were studying, botany or weather, maybe, but more likely Mr. K felt a walk in nature to observe the growing plants was good for us. Anyway, we did manage to get out of the classroom frequently that spring, which was the important part for all of us!

Part of the rhythm of the morning with Mr. K, and what I remember most fondly, was gathering together to play the recorder. It was our first activity after the morning verse. We had quite the repertoire of pieces—Bach, Mozart, Kodaly, to name just a few. All of the pieces had different parts, requiring different types of

recorders. Mr. K generally played the only bass recorder, and the rest of us played either tenor, alto, or soprano. I’m sure most of us could have played the pieces in our sleep by the end of each school year, but we never seemed to tire of them. He always let us choose which ones we were going to play each morning. It was a wonderful start to the day because it really brought everyone in the class together, despite the different levels of musical experience and our various personalities.

Mr. K took the class through to the end of grade eight, and then decided to call it quits after another two years. (During those two years, he and a few other teachers set up the high school.) Holding a class and teaching the Waldorf way is very demanding, and requires unlimited reserves of patience, which Mr. K did not possess. We sometimes had to watch for flying chalk aimed at someone chatting or not paying attention. I believe it was usually the boys who got it, though!

Quite frankly, Aedsgard had other plans. His dream was to have his own farm, so after stepping down from class teaching, he and Elisabeth realized that dream and bought a farm just outside of Cookstown, north of the school. He continued on as the woodwork and gym teacher, while at the same time, through his ingenuity and determination, he single-handedly rebuilt the barn and renovated the house that stood on the property. And, soon after, Elisabeth gave birth to Jessica; they were now a family of five.

Aedsgard farmed his land biodynamically and so had a mixed farm of cows, chickens, and crops. He also decided to live up to his name and began a business baking bread. This was a great thing for him, because it got him out visiting; not only did he bake the bread but he also delivered it. My mother talks of how lovely it was that he used to sit and chat over a cup of coffee while doing his rounds. This new way of life would have provided a wonderful respite from the demands and politics of teaching.

Farming is back-breakingly hard work, as any farmer can attest; it is something one really has to love passionately or consist of



Koekebakker family in 1977: Elisabeth, Aedsgard, Alexander '84, Jessica '95, and Mary Anne '82

a strong drive carried in the blood through generations. Aedsgard loved farming very much, but he discovered it wasn’t everything for him. He felt a little isolated by it and experienced a struggle with depression, and so, because the universe knew he was a teacher, he was drawn back to teaching again. He himself enjoyed learning, and I suppose, like all teachers, got much satisfaction from being in communion with others by imparting his knowledge to them.

He volunteered part-time at a school nearby and then began substituting there.

Aedsgard had also begun keeping himself busy with another project: he was building himself a light airplane from a kit supplied to him by Chris Heinz, a friend and a parent at TWS. It had long been a dream of his to own a plane and be able to fly it. And as with his other dreams, he accomplished this one also. He finally found something he could do purely for the enjoyment of it. He loved flying, and gloried in being able to look down on the world, to soar above everything. This made him truly happy.

Aedsgard accomplished so much. He was not content with the status quo, and knew when it was time to move on. Living, for Aedsgard, was not about being comfortable and sticking things out, it was about passion. If he could no longer kindle the passion for something, it was time to make a change, and he always knew what he would move on to. Never one to sit around and wait for something to come to him, he always had a plan, his mind was always a step or two ahead. He had been a successful gardener, a roving minstrel, an accomplished teacher, a farmer, a baker, and a pilot. Simultaneously, he maintained his love of learning, a spiritual connection to the world through anthroposophy, and did his absolute best to be a loving husband and father.

Aedsgard’s life was too short: the plane that he built with such joy crashed in the summer of 1991 and took him from this world too soon. But his time here had been rich and full. He had pursued his many passions with energy and enthusiasm, not allowing compromise or inertia to slow him down, and in this he was and remains an inspiration to all around him and is missed by many. ■



Elisabeth and Aedsgard in the late 70s.  
Naming Aedsgard’s airplane with Jessica, Alexander, and Aedsgard’s mother, Elisabeth Lebrecht, in the late 80s.







Max in Kindergarten, 1992

**Max Dannenberg '07** was born into an artistic family on the 14th of December, 1988. He attended the Toronto Waldorf School from the age of three until he left after grade eight to attend The Arts York program at Unionville High School where he registered in the Visual Arts Department and explored new horizons. After high school, he took some time to experience life out of the educational system. He road-tripped across the United States, worked a myriad interesting jobs, taught English, volunteered in Thailand, and traveled through the forgotten land of Laos. He also solo cycled through remote Cambodia, Vietnam, and Southern China for several months. After his time frolicking abroad, he spent the summer working in Toronto and then moved to Montreal, Quebec, to attend McGill University.



Class of 1984 SEED, Toronto

Susan in Grade 1, 1972

**Susan Digby, TWS handwork teacher**, grew up in Toronto, one of five children. She had early brushes with anthroposophy through her caregiver, Lise Polacek, and being taken to see the *Shepherds' Play*. She was unhappy at school until Grade 11, when she began at SEED, a downtown experimental school. This positive experience was her inspiration for teaching. After going on to complete a theatre arts degree at the University of Guelph, and a bachelor of education at York University, Susan settled in Richmond Hill to teach and raise a family with her husband, Phil. She began as the assistant in the first nursery at TWS in 1991. She has four sons, all TWS kids (Eli '05, currently studying landscape architecture at Guelph, Simon in Grade 10, Hugh in Grade 7, Graham in Grade 2). Besides teaching, Susan has creative outlets performing in the *Shepherds' Play* and singing in the Muskoka Minks. She currently teaches handwork from Grades 4-10 and is the Lower School Chair.



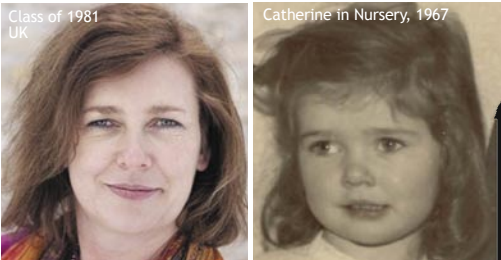
Tim in Grade 5, 1995

**Tim Dannenberg's '02** earliest memories include being dropped by a caregiver out of the ground floor window of his childcare centre (in the notorious squat "Regenbogenfabrik", Rainbow Factory, in West Berlin) into the sidecar of his dad's motorbike at pick-up time. When he was three years old, he emigrated to Canada, bringing his parents with him, and became what is known as a "lifer" at the Toronto Waldorf School. He liked kindergarten so much he stayed for three years. After being a good boy in lower school, he grew tired of it, and decided to try his hand at being a bad boy in high school. He found he could do both equally well. After graduating from TWS and completing his OACs at Alexander Mack, Tim travelled extensively—from Saltspring Island to the Mekong River, from Skagway to Tijuana, mostly trekking solo. After many adventures he settled down to study fine art in the German town of Münster, where he is currently in his eighth semester. In the first half of 2009, an exchange programme took him to Ramallah in the West Bank of Palestine.



Katherine in Grade 6, 1978

After graduating from high school, **Katherine Dynes '84** completed a diploma in acting at the Ryerson Theatre School. She worked as an actor and front of house manager for the following ten years. Theatre took her to the wilds of Ontario and Quebec, and she took herself to Vietnam, Thailand, and Europe. In 2000 she returned to school and, after seven years of part-time study, completed her BFA at OCAD, graduating in June of 2007 as the OCAD Medal recipient for the Printmaking Department. Katherine's work can be seen in the feature film adaptation of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, on which she worked as an artist, art coach, and papermaking consultant. During her time at OCAD, Katherine discovered Reiki, a form of therapeutic touch which helps restore balance to the body, mind, and soul. She found Reiki to be so profoundly healing in her own life that she decided to study it herself. She became a Reiki Master and now divides her time between her work as a Chiropractic Health Assistant and her Reiki practice. Katherine lives and works in downtown Toronto.



Class of 1981 UK

Catherine in Nursery, 1967

**Catherine Daugherty** grew up on the Wirral, north-west England and after completing her "A" levels in 1981 at an all girls' school, she worked for a BBC subsidiary in Liverpool, U.K. Two years later after the company relocated, she took advantage of family connections and moved to the Toronto area where she met her husband, George. She spent nine years in the financial services industry working in IT, marketing, finance and business development before their first child was born. Shortly after the birth and after becoming a casualty of a corporate downsizing in 1992, they decided to relocate to Guelph to have their second child. While raising her two young girls, Catherine pursued her BA at the University of Guelph before being sidetracked by the start up of the Trillium Waldorf School. In January 1998, she took on the role of part-time administrator, a position that grew over the years to full-time Director of Administration encompassing enrollment, outreach, financial and administrative management. She began at TWS as Development Officer in January 2007.



Magda in Nursery, 1989

**Magda Eden '04** lives in Toronto, where she works as a flash animator for television. After graduating from a lifetime of Waldorf education (AHWS and TWS), she attended a three-year program at Max the Mutt Animation School until 2007, where she was classically trained in fine arts, and then animation arts. She's worked as an animator on two TV series currently airing, and does freelance illustration. Recent works include colouring pages for Funschool.com (a Disney-owned company) and a children's book for a friend. After taking some time off for her health, Magda is currently working on some of her own pet projects, and is looking forward to jumping back into work and continuing to grow as a student for life. Magda's sketchbook work can be found at <http://miggles.blogspot.com>.

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Alice Priestley's *outofbounds* Morning Verse illustrations 1 & 2 are for sale in poster form.

Contact Alice to place an order: 416.488.7491  
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Simantha in grade school; Simantha and Suzy dress up, kindergarten 1972

## Simantha McGuggan '85 1967-1990

by *Suzy Bazanna (Smith) '85*  
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Simantha and I first met in kindergarten in 1971 when TWS was housed in St. Patrick's Anglican Church in Willowdale. Our teacher was Mrs. Smolski. The Toronto Waldorf School as we know it today was just a piece of land with nothing on it but trees and vegetation.

We made an instant connection, and quickly became best friends. We were inseparable: thick as thieves, sisters at heart. If Simantha was in trouble, I was in trouble. If Simantha was in the hall or doing a time-out I was usually right there beside her, and vice versa. The same was true of all our childhood successes and joys, which were many.

Simantha had a gentle soul that radiated outward through her warm smile and sparkling laugh. She was well liked by all in the class. Like many young girls, we liked to play dress-up and make believe. We were mothers, teachers, doctors, nurses, and professional singers. We took turns singing in front of the mirror at home using our recorders as microphones and telling each other how great we were. We played house with our dolls, something we could do for hours. We dressed our babies up, put make-up on them, braided their hair, and even cut their hair at the "hairstylist's." One night when we had one of our many sleep-overs, Simantha and I (if you asked her, she would likely say it was my idea) decided that the dolls were not the only ones who needed a new look. We got into my mother's vanity, grabbed a razor and proceeded to shave off each other's eyebrows. No one could say we weren't adventurous!

We were members of the first grade one class in TWS's new building on Bathurst Street. We used to love it when it rained because we got to disburse buckets throughout the classroom to catch the water coming through the leaky roof. Simantha's favorite time of the day was when Mr. Rudolph told one of his fascinating stories. I also remember how happy she was when we would receive a hand-drawn original birthday card from him. We were lucky to have such an artistic, imaginative teacher. Another favorite class was handwork where we got to *make* our own dolls. It took us soooooo long to get all the spurs and knots out of the wool so the stuffing was ready for the doll—we thought we would NEVER get to sew on hair and make their (minimalist) faces.

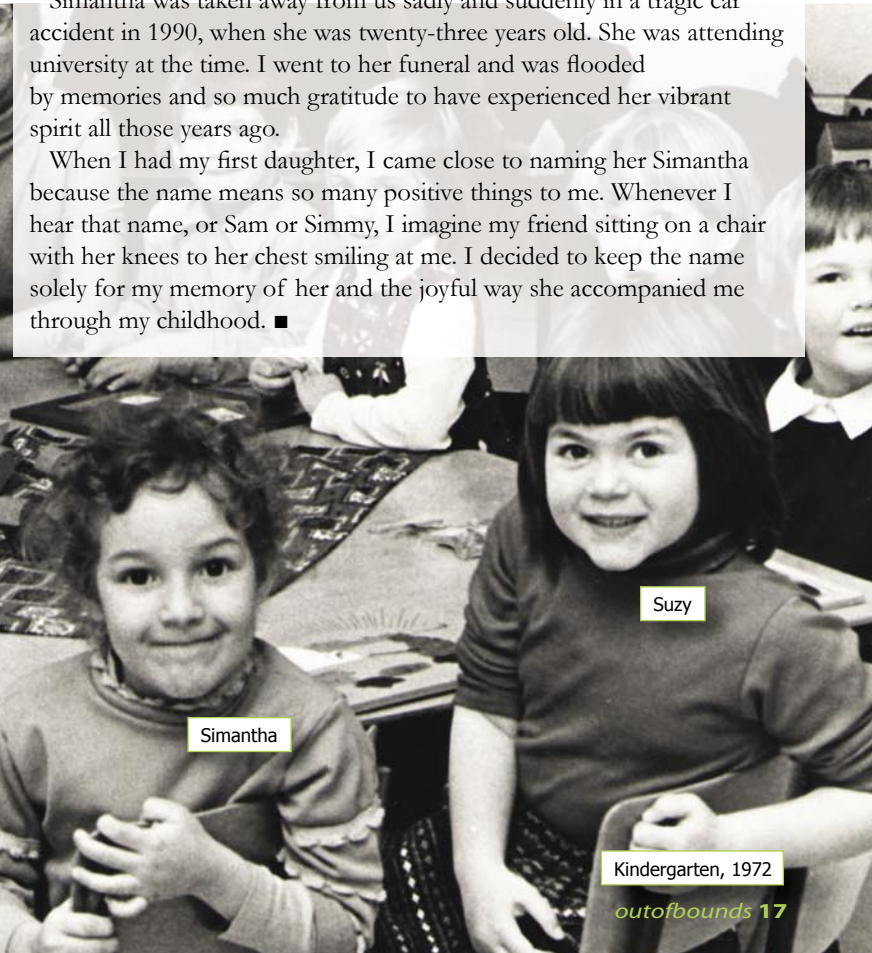
Simantha had an older brother, Ian, who we used to drive crazy with

our singing and dancing around, pretending to be princesses and rock stars. Big brothers never really can be bothered with their pesky little sisters, but still I felt his brotherly affection for Simantha. I remember being picked up from school by her dad on sleep-over nights and he was a kind, gentle, and funny man.

Most of my memories of Simantha are of when we were young children. As we grew older we went our separate ways and found it hard to keep in touch. She left the school in 1976 to attend a school in her neighborhood and we did not see each other much after that first year of separation. Then I left TWS after graduating from grade eight in 1981 to go to an all girls boarding school in Whitby called Trafalgar Castle (Ontario Ladies College).

Simantha was taken away from us sadly and suddenly in a tragic car accident in 1990, when she was twenty-three years old. She was attending university at the time. I went to her funeral and was flooded by memories and so much gratitude to have experienced her vibrant spirit all those years ago.

When I had my first daughter, I came close to naming her Simantha because the name means so many positive things to me. Whenever I hear that name, or Sam or Simmy, I imagine my friend sitting on a chair with her knees to her chest smiling at me. I decided to keep the name solely for my memory of her and the joyful way she accompanied me through my childhood. ■



Simantha

Suzy

Kindergarten, 1972





Rowan Tree children busy with preschool activities. Photos courtesy of Rowan Tree.

## GREETINGS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS

### Rowan Tree Preschool

A children's program in Peterborough, Ontario



by Jessica Lindeman, teacher at  
Rowan Tree Preschool  
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*"Our highest endeavour must be to develop  
free human beings who are able of themselves  
to impart purpose and direction to their lives."  
Rudolf Steiner*

Each morning the children make their way "up the mountain" to our second floor classroom, and then with heavy breathing and shining faces, they remove their boots and backpacks and spill like overflowing cups through the door and into their day at Rowan Tree. They do not bat an eye at the thirty stairs they must climb before entering the sunny and spacious classrooms on the second floor of a downtown church in Peterborough, Ontario. This is the home of Peterborough's only program that works with the principles of Waldorf education, and it currently welcomes children aged three to six.

Rowan Tree was founded in 2003, and initially started as a home-based program in a house nestled along the banks of the Otonabe River. The program has always run four days a week from 9 to 3 pm. Each year, approximately eleven children are enrolled in Rowan Tree.

Each child generally attends one or two days per week and the group size is very small and is capped at five children per day. Last fall, the program relocated to our home in the church, which has proven to be ideal. The children stand in awe of the church's architectural grandeur and beauty, and its height: its four turrets pierce the sky.

It is our goal to expand and develop into a larger program and eventually into a Waldorf school. The Peterborough community has expressed its keen desire and enthusiasm for a full-fledged Waldorf school. Our greatest hope is to draw Waldorf teachers to the area who are eager to join our community and help us to grow and nurture the seed that Rowan Tree Preschool has planted.

We are in the process of applying for a license from the Ministry of Community and Youth Services. This will allow us to increase the preschool size and also to hire more teachers. Our goal is to apply for private school status through the Ministry of Education and to start a grade one!

The children at Rowan Tree are immersed in imaginary play, stories, artistic endeavours, and outdoor education and exploration each day. They are also discovering the world of friendships with all of its complexities, challenges, and pure joys. The children crave meaningful connections with one another and they make them partly through active, self-directed play. There is nothing more nourishing and essential in childhood than purposeful play.

## A MORNING AT ROWAN TREE

Annabel is the first to arrive and as I greet her at the door she steps into the classroom with such breathless anticipation and urgency that I must take a step back. Her eyes swiftly brush over the entire room with one powerful sweep. Then, she quickly crosses the floor and comes to rest beside Gnome Land, which is a miniature community of gnomes, fairies, and animals. She gently picks up Grandmother Rose and walks her out of her house and over to Turtle Pond to visit the frogs. Then Grandmother Rose meets ladybug on the bridge and asks if she has seen Yellow Peter. They walk to Peter's home under the mountain and knock on his door. Annabel carefully accounts for every gnome living in Gnome Land, reassuring herself that no one has gone

*We look for fish in the river, observe  
the pair of osprey nesting over the  
dam, glimpse the numerous robin  
nests in the spruce trees, find broken  
blue eggs, and pretend to be birds  
ourselves as we cluster together in  
our very own homemade nest.*

Just before snack, Simon asks about Tidy Thomas, our gnome who lives in the classroom and has as sack full of treasures. "Whose turn is it to be Tidy Thomas' helper today?" Before Owen

hands out the small, polished stones from the sack, the children sing a song for Thomas as they tidy up the classroom. Once Owen has handed each child a gift from Thomas, the children carefully place them on the nature table. Finally the children can gather at the table for their much anticipated snack.

Then we get ready for our nature walk. The children come to school prepared for all types of weather. We are outside for at least one hour each day and have easy access to two huge parks. We cross over the Otonabe River and skirt the banks of the wetland, where we catch frogs with our nets, gently observe them and release them again, climb up on the beaver lodge nearby and view the damage the beavers have inflicted on the trees in the area. We look for fish in the river, observe the pair of osprey nesting over the dam, glimpse the numerous robin nests in the spruce trees, find broken blue eggs, and pretend to be birds ourselves as we cluster together in our very own homemade nest. I know that if children are given the opportunity to immerse themselves repeatedly in the natural world, with the freedom to explore and discover on their own terms, they will effortlessly, without lectures or directives from adults, develop the capacity and desire to care for their environment. And this because they will have had the chance to personally fall in love with it. I hope my students will come to see that the natural world is an integral part of their own community and that, therefore, they are an integral part of the natural world.

It is always a challenge to wrap up our nature walk and to head the children back indoors. As a result, we often spend an extended time outdoors until lunch is upon us and the children can't ignore their rumbling bellies any longer. We make a brisk walk back to school and the children have just enough energy to climb back up 'their mountain' to take off their shoes, retrieve their lunch boxes, and collapse heavily on their chairs for lunch. Rachel heaves a sigh and announces with gusto that she is as hungry as a bear. She drinks deeply from her water cup as she waits for the others to settle. We fold our hands together and sing our daily grace: *'For health and strength and daily bread, we praise your name o Lord.'* We sing our grace twice through and the room fills with the uneven, shining voices of the children, eager and fervent. Eating happily side-by-side, the children bring to a close their morning at Rowan Tree.

If you would like to learn more about Rowan Tree, please do not hesitate to contact me, or even better, come and visit us in the heart of Peterborough, Ontario. ■



missing. Soon all of the children have arrived and Annabel assembles them in chairs around Gnome Land. She continues with her story as the other children sit obediently and listen. Soon Simon wanders out of his chair and over to the dress up corner, where he ties on a skunk's tail. He insists that he won't spray, and that he doesn't stink. He builds a skunk's den and climbs inside and hides. Then Lucy eagerly stands up and announces that it is her turn to tell a story. Naturally Annabel is not ready to give up her role as storyteller. Soon, however, she is coaxed to sit down and Lucy takes her place. Gnome Land is one of many special features at Rowan Tree that call upon the power and depth of the children's imagination.

Once the children have had their free play and settled in together, we all gather on the carpet for a story, then singing. With their arms outstretched, flying like a bird, the children sing:

*Little bird, little bird, where are you going to.  
Little bird, little bird, where will you fly?  
Into the wood and over the meadow.  
In the blue sky that is where I will fly.*

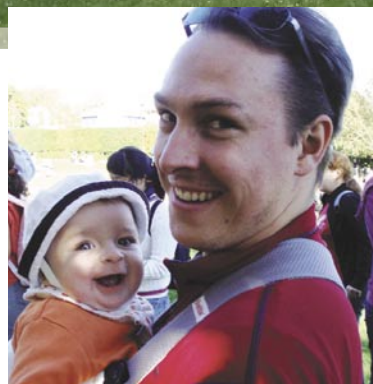




William Morris House residences,  
Gloucestershire, England

# INTERNATIONAL Waldorf News

## THE CAMPHILL MOVEMENT WORLDWIDE



by Noah Black '96  
incanus78@yahoo.ca  
photos courtesy of Noah

*“The healthy social life is found  
When, in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection  
And when, in the community,  
The virtue of each one is living.”  
Rudolf Steiner*

As I sit here trying to think what I will write about myself and Camphill, this oft-repeated verse drifts into my head. I contrast it with my other thoughts about our upcoming Office for Standards in Education inspection and our efforts to “render unto Caesar” instead of focusing holistically on supporting the individuals in our communal care, which is our true mandate. On first glance this verse would appear to be at odds with itself. For individual and community are supposedly two polar notions. But Steiner suggests that they require each other: “the community within the individual, the individual within the community.” Human history is strewn with the wreckage of failed social experimentation attempting to synthesize these two ideals and yet Camphill as a movement holds these ideals as core principles.

So what is this “Camphill movement”? What do they do and how did it all begin? I’m going to give a “Camphill for Dummies” version of things as well as share where I fit into this grand tapestry of events.

Camphill is now a world-wide movement. It is a collective of individual communities striving to live, educate, and work holistically guided by anthroposophical principles with people who have complex needs.

It started with a small group of individuals who found each other in the 1930s through their shared engagement with the ideas of Rudolf Steiner. One of this group was a Viennese doctor by the name of Karl Koenig who was intent on developing new approaches to working with children and young people with complex needs. Together with his colleagues, he set about creating a school that would take a radically new approach to educating special needs children. At the same time, however, darker more powerful events were unfolding in Germany and Austria. In 1938, the Nazis assumed control of Austria through annexation. As Koenig and most of his colleagues were Jewish, they were forced to recognize the need to realize their dream outside of Austria. They looked to Great Britain and determined that this would be the ideal place for them to create their therapeutic community. Gradually, each member of the group made his or her way to the north-east coast of Scotland and Aberdeenshire where they had the good fortune of acquiring a modest manor-house and estate through generous benefactors. Thus, the first Camphill community was founded in Milltimber, Aberdeenshire, in the late 1930s.

Once again, however, world events caught up with the fledgling community. Great Britain declared war on Nazi Germany in 1939 and by 1940 Nazi Germany was making preparations to invade Britain. Despite being political refugees who fled the German regime, Karl Koenig and his male German-born colleagues were regarded as enemy aliens by Great Britain and interned in a camp on the Isle of Man for the duration of the

war. During this time, the female members of Camphill took over the establishing and running of the community.

After the war, in the early 1950s, Camphill acquired additional land in the Aberdeen region and began to develop more communities where adolescents and young adults with special needs could live and work. There was instant and widespread interest in these new communities. Camphill offered young people with special needs a kind of holistic, respectful, and empowering life in a supportive and sheltered environment that was absolutely new and revolutionary. People came from across Great Britain to take up residence in the communities. Soon the first sheltered community for adults was established. It was located in the Yorkshire Dales and called Botton Village. In the 1960s and 70s, the Camphill movement (as it now began to be called) moved from strength to strength and more communities were established in Britain, Ireland, Germany, South Africa, and the United States. By this time, Karl Koenig and his closest colleagues had retired or passed on and the initiative was taken up by younger generations.

Currently there are approximately one hundred Camphill or Camphill-affiliated communities throughout the world. Each community has its own unique cultural identity and destiny, yet also shares common principles and approaches with all the others. A central principle that all Camphill communities share is the notion that the human individual is a spiritual as well as a physical being. The essence of Camphill lies in its mission statement which reads: “Camphill .... is based on the acceptance of the spiritual uniqueness of each human being, regardless of disability or religious or racial background.” (Mission Statement of the Camphill Movement)

This means that Camphill is founded on the principle of the individual as a unique, spiritual entity and that by supporting complex needs individuals in a holistic, communal way, the individual can rise to his or her full potential not only physically and socially, but spiritually as well. As Karl Koenig once explained: “Only the help from person to person .... the becoming aware of the other person’s individuality without inquiring into his or her creed, world conception or political affiliations, but simply the meeting, eye to eye, of two persons creates the curative education which encounters, in a healing way, the threat to our innermost humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

With this in mind, each Camphill community strives to integrate these principles into practice within the daily and seasonal cycle. In most communities the members are of diverse and varied backgrounds, and this is true both of individuals with complex needs and the volunteers and employed support staff. The idea behind this is to develop the sense of interdependence amongst each community member, regardless of his or her ability or background; each individual has a task to fulfill in the community and though the tasks vary in size and responsibility they each play a significant role in the overall functioning and running of the collective. Furthermore, co-mingling the lives of individuals with varied complexities and needs is therapeutic in and of itself since it empowers special needs people, who are generally marginalized and isolated in our society, by valuing their contribution and presence, and brings to the other members the gift of true interdependent community living. The social, emotional, and spiritual development of each individual is enhanced.

There are typically three types of Camphill communities: schools for young children and teenagers; college/training centres for teenagers and young adults; and adult communities for young and older adults. Day-to-day life generally includes communal meals together with morning and afternoon classes or practice-based workshops working together in groups. Evenings combine a mixture of individual leisure/hobby pursuits or group activities/festivities. Whereas the daily practices and approaches may vary slightly from Camphill to Camphill, the observance and celebration of seasonal festivals, and “offering service” on Sundays, is similar throughout and thus help to create a “loose bond” between communities. This is

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St. John's play on the green of William  
Morris House, Gloucestershire, England



*I look forward to being further involved in efforts to demonstrate Camphill's continued relevance in our current individualistic Western society, which values independence and autonomous living over interdependence and community living.*

continues in many places, more diverse modes of living and working have developed that focus on addressing the individual's ability to determine his or her own future. In my community, this aspect plays a significant factor in the education and training curriculum where guidance towards healthy choices and supported independence are ultimate objectives for most of the students who pass through our college. These objectives reflect the general trend in developed societies in working with individuals with complex needs. The focus is on integration of the complex needs individual into mainstream society. Most Camphill communities recognize this tendency yet still strive to continue to address the needs of the individual as a social and spiritual being in a communal environment dedicated to this development. As such, Camphill's primary focus on holistic human support and development within a community setting remains.

Camphill communities also emphasize practice-based skills that serve the individual as well as the community. The intention is to develop not only skills that will help the individual become more autonomous, but also skills that serve the community and society. In many communities, workshops in which complex-needs individuals work produce articles of function and beauty that often serve a much-needed purpose within the community.

While many organizations working with complex needs individuals successfully provide a meaningful existence for the complex needs individual, Camphill strives to do this by taking into account the multifaceted potential of each human being as a productive physical, social, and spiritual entity.

As the Camphill movement has grown and developed over the decades, it has been joined in its holistic support for complex needs individuals by many other similar organizations. Likewise, through the efforts of such initiatives, national governments in the developed world have increased their awareness of their responsibilities to such vulnerable citizens, particularly through the regulation and maintenance of care and educational standards. By doing this, however, certain

cultural perspectives of practice have been adopted that sometimes threaten to override established alternative methods of practice. This is something that the Camphill movement is faced with on a number of different levels in a variety of countries and it has been up to each community to discover how to respond, adapt, and work with government bodies and demands.

In the early years of the Camphill movement, the challenges most communities faced were often related to practical matters of survival as many places received little or no government financial assistance. Today, the issues facing particularly the more established communities have to do with questions of self-identity and relevance in a fast-paced modern world that champions individual rights, choice, independence, autonomous living over interdependence and community, and increasingly pushes to integrate complex needs individuals into mainstream life. How these challenges are addressed is very much determined by the unique history of each Camphill community. In some cases, communities have been unable to weather particular challenges to do with this governmental agenda and have dissolved out of existence; in other cases, communities have re-branded themselves to the extent that little remains of the original Camphill impulse. In most cases, however, communities strive to take a middle road by engaging in meaningful, open dialogue with mainstream approaches to educating and empowering people with special needs while also staying true to key core principles, especially regarding community and spirituality, that continue to be relevant and inform Camphill identity into the future.

Like many of my colleagues, I drifted into an involvement in the Camphill movement almost by accident. I had known about Camphill for some time, having watched on the periphery as the Camphill Nottawasaga initiative took shape over many years near Barrie, Ontario. I must admit though, back in early high school I had little interest in it. But in grade eleven, I spent the better part of three weeks with my classmates on a social practicum in Camphill Soltane, Pennsylvania. I had a great time, not only enjoying the international diversity of the co-workers there but also feeling privileged to get to know and work with some of the individual residents of the community. This planted a little seed of interest in me.

When I graduated from TWS in 1996, I saved up some money to take a "gap year" and travelled through Europe. I was on the road for about three months when I realized that my Canadian dollars were no match for the Euro. As an after-thought, I had taken with me a list of Camphill communities in case a "plan B" scenario was required. When plan B looked like my only option for staying in Europe, I decided to apply to work in Camphill communities in Scotland—a country I had always wanted to visit. I applied to four places in the new year of 1998 and after some tense weeks of waiting while staying with friends in Vienna, I got a phone call from Camphill Newton Dee Village in Aberdeen. I accepted their offer on

the spot.

Two weeks later I was in Scotland on a bus up to Aberdeen with little clue where I was going and what I was getting into. I ended up working in Newton Dee's village bakery—something that I never thought I would have interest in—having committed to working in the community for six months. Within weeks, I was loving the experience and had decided to commit myself for a full year while I gave some thought to my future. In the end I stayed for a full fifteen months before finally settling back into Toronto to save money for university. Four years later and one bachelor's degree behind me in German Studies, I decided to return to Newton Dee to begin a unique bachelor's degree in curative education (BACE) offered by the University of Aberdeen. The degree is organized around applied work in the Camphill community. This was a chance for me to balance practical work, social interaction, and my academic endeavours—a true thinking, feeling, and willing experience, if you will. Shortly afterwards, I met my partner Veronica who was working in the Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools and finishing her BACE. She moved to Newton Dee and we both eventually took on responsibility for a house with five adult residents with challenges that ranged from epilepsy, autism, obsessive/compulsions, and dementia. These residents were in our care for two years before Veronica and I decided to have a change of community and moved down to William Morris House, in Gloucestershire, England, a Camphill college that works with adolescents and young adults with complex needs. We have now been here for two years and a lot has changed for us in this time. We are responsible for managing a residential house with six students, four volunteer co-workers, and a cook and house support worker. In the meantime, Veronica and I got married and now have a young son, Lucas. It is a busy life working from seven in the morning until nine at night on average, with one day off per week during term time. Holidays are very generous however with approximately eleven weeks off per year. As live-in "houseparents," we do not receive a wage but live comfortably from an allocated personal budget as well as collectively managing household and community expenses. Members of the "management group," a body of houseparents, teachers, and office staff, make decisions collectively and lend their expertise to making informed decisions about all matters that arise.

With the ever increasing demand for change from the mainstream, I feel myself being challenged to find ways for my community to find a middle ground between the culture and practices that have long made Camphill what it is, and new ideas coming from the mainstream about what is best for complex needs people. This is difficult but also exciting work and I look forward to being further involved in efforts to demonstrate Camphill's continued relevance in our current individualistic Western society, which values independence and autonomous living over interdependence and community living. I think this will be possible if we are able to powerfully demonstrate how true individuality requires community, and community requires true individuals. ■

<sup>1</sup> Karl Koenig in Henning Hansmann, *Education for Special Needs: Principles and Practices in Camphill Schools* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1992) 17.

The Camphill movement regards itself as a "Christian" movement not necessarily related to any religious denomination other than through its anthroposophical ties with the Christian Community Church. The Christian impulse has acted as a "spiritual backbone" for Camphill communities giving form to the weekly and seasonal rhythms. This is where the Bible evenings, Sunday service and Christian festivals fit in. It is to provide a path for community members to work on their own inner development through which they find strength and deeper perceptions/understanding of the individuals with whom they live and work. It is also an opportunity for many individuals with complex needs to develop their own sense of spirituality—whether they continue to pursue that through Christianity or another spiritual path is of course up to them. It is a "laying of a seed" to inner awareness. Naturally volunteers, be they long or short term, join Camphill communities while retaining their own faiths/beliefs. I, for one, do not consider myself "Christian" or necessarily have a strong personal connection to the Camphill festivals/services; yet I recognize the value they have for many of our student members as an awakening process to their inner development. Having said this, Camphill communities are also awakening to the importance of providing other spiritual experiences/opportunities for their members; of course, this depends on each community's receptiveness as well as on the initiative of its individual members.

Noah Black

The views expressed in this article are Noah's and do not necessarily represent those of the Camphill Movement at large.

*FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN KNOWING MORE ABOUT CAMPHILL, NOAH HAS COMPILED A READING LIST:*

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Lievegoed, Bernard. *Phases—The Spiritual Rhythms of Adult Life*. Forest Row: Sophia Books, 2003.

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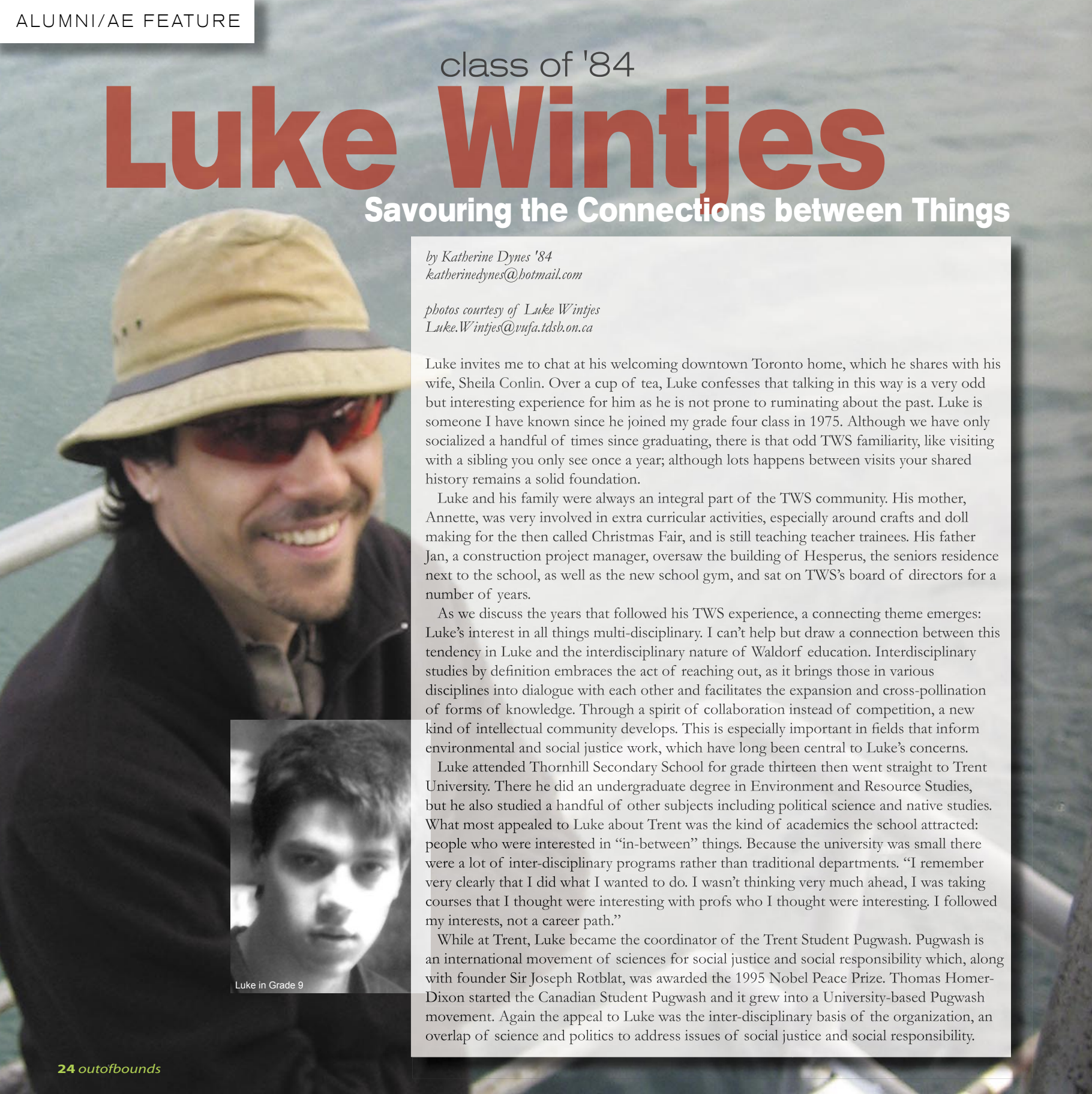
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class of '84

# Luke Wintjes

## Savouring the Connections between Things

by Katherine Dynes '84  
katherinedynes@hotmail.com

photos courtesy of Luke Wintjes  
Luke.Wintjes@vufa.tdsb.on.ca

Luke invites me to chat at his welcoming downtown Toronto home, which he shares with his wife, Sheila Conlin. Over a cup of tea, Luke confesses that talking in this way is a very odd but interesting experience for him as he is not prone to ruminating about the past. Luke is someone I have known since he joined my grade four class in 1975. Although we have only socialized a handful of times since graduating, there is that odd TWS familiarity, like visiting with a sibling you only see once a year; although lots happens between visits your shared history remains a solid foundation.

Luke and his family were always an integral part of the TWS community. His mother, Annette, was very involved in extra curricular activities, especially around crafts and doll making for the then called Christmas Fair, and is still teaching teacher trainees. His father Jan, a construction project manager, oversaw the building of Hesperus, the seniors residence next to the school, as well as the new school gym, and sat on TWS's board of directors for a number of years.

As we discuss the years that followed his TWS experience, a connecting theme emerges: Luke's interest in all things multi-disciplinary. I can't help but draw a connection between this tendency in Luke and the interdisciplinary nature of Waldorf education. Interdisciplinary studies by definition embraces the act of reaching out, as it brings those in various disciplines into dialogue with each other and facilitates the expansion and cross-pollination of forms of knowledge. Through a spirit of collaboration instead of competition, a new kind of intellectual community develops. This is especially important in fields that inform environmental and social justice work, which have long been central to Luke's concerns.

Luke attended Thornhill Secondary School for grade thirteen then went straight to Trent University. There he did an undergraduate degree in Environment and Resource Studies, but he also studied a handful of other subjects including political science and native studies. What most appealed to Luke about Trent was the kind of academics the school attracted: people who were interested in "in-between" things. Because the university was small there were a lot of inter-disciplinary programs rather than traditional departments. "I remember very clearly that I did what I wanted to do. I wasn't thinking very much ahead, I was taking courses that I thought were interesting with profs who I thought were interesting. I followed my interests, not a career path."

While at Trent, Luke became the coordinator of the Trent Student Pugwash. Pugwash is an international movement of sciences for social justice and social responsibility which, along with founder Sir Joseph Rotblat, was awarded the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize. Thomas Homer-Dixon started the Canadian Student Pugwash and it grew into a University-based Pugwash movement. Again the appeal to Luke was the inter-disciplinary basis of the organization, an overlap of science and politics to address issues of social justice and social responsibility.

*Through a spirit of collaboration instead of competition, a new kind of intellectual community develops.*

After graduating from Trent, Luke spent a year split between Toronto, Montreal, and Saskatoon getting very involved in various NGOs. "I went to Ottawa and became chair

of Canadian Student Pugwash. I also worked for the Canadian Youth Foundation on a special project to try to get youth involved in the Earth Summit in 1992. Believe it or not, it was the Conservative Government under Lucien Bouchard as Environment Minister that spent a lot of money trying to get youth participation in building networks for youth environment-related projects across the country. This was a group in Ottawa trying to promote that—it was a coalition of youth groups across the country. So I was involved with that as an employee while I was on the board of directors and chairing the Student Pugwash for about a year."

During this time Luke's initial interest in policy and the environment evolved into a curiosity about how people organize around environmental issues and the public administration of environmental issues. After two years working at a number of jobs in the NGO sector, Luke returned to school to do a Master's of Environmental Studies at York University. "Now York is big, but its Environmental Studies program has a bit of that flavour of the inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary that has always been attractive to me. It was attractive about Trent, it was attractive about York, and interestingly I now teach in a high school where a big aspect of what we do is interdisciplinary studies." At York, he did a split focus between transportation and organization. "Social organization around environmental issues was really my thesis topic. Mixing environmental issues with policy, with administration: how people work together, how you actually make environmental change effectively and efficiently. The lovely thing about doing this sort of interdisciplinary work is that you're in one course looking at transportation issues with a bunch of planners. Then the next day you're in a different class with a bunch of people who are interested in public administration, and half of them are doing an MBA. And then the next day you're in a Women's Studies class. York allowed for that. Some people came out as planners, some people came out as environmental educators, some people came out and did environmental policy, and a whole bunch of us came out having done a little bit of everything, and that was okay,

too. It was a really great experience." Again Luke had found himself following his interests with no clear career trajectory in mind.

The early 90s was a very bad time for NGOs as funding was diminishing, and so Luke worked in construction for a few years after leaving York. "That was actually a nice break. I worked with my father on a couple of big projects. He was the project manager and I was his assistant. That was really a nice thing to do in terms of working together, but he was really on the verge of retiring and wanted to slow down. It wasn't the career for me. I didn't want to take over that business and be a project manager. I don't have the hard edge for it, and that's when teaching seemed to arrive. It was a nice way to continue being a generalist and not have to worry about a paycheque coming in. I met Sheila, who's a teacher, in 1996 and she had a lot of teacher friends, so I was hanging around with a group of teachers." Influenced by this new circle of friends and a summer job working for Parks Canada as an interpreter in a provincial park, Luke decided to enroll at teacher's college.

"I graduated from teachers college (U of T) at the time of amalgamation in 1998, a very conservative time. The school boards were cutting back massively, but just by luck I ended up in this job at Ursula Franklin Academy late in September. I think I was one of about a half dozen people hired by the Toronto School Board that year. It was luck, and being in the right place at the right time. It was really exciting because Ursula Franklin Academy was only three years old, and Ursula Franklin herself was still very much involved with the school, very hands on. The school was strongly influenced by her values and her thinking about technology, so it was right up my alley. This was exactly what Pugwash was about. I had gotten involved with Pugwash because of her Massey Lectures, "The Real World of Technology," which were broadcast on the CBC. They were really pivotal for me, that whole thinking about us being in charge of technology rather than it being in charge of us. And of course Ursula Franklin is super cool."

Ursula Franklin Academy is a high school within the public system but is categorized as a 'specialist school'; it is a school that offers a regular high school diploma but with a particular emphasis. UFA's focus is technology and integration. "There

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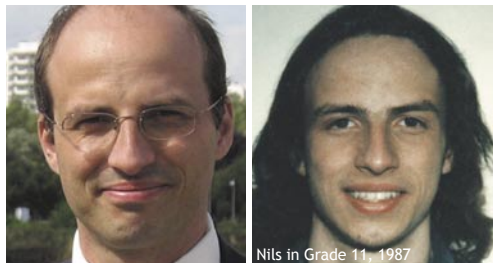






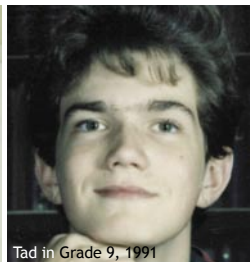
Elaine in Grade 4, 1970

**Elaine Grech (Smedley) '79** was one of the three students who entered Alan Howard's Grade 2 classroom on that auspicious day in 1968 when TWS first opened its doors. She was among the first students to graduate from a TWS Grade 12. This was 1979, and a grand feat considering it was a "guinea pig class." After completing Grade 13, she obtained a B.A. in psychology at Trent University. Following the realization that such a degree was not sufficient to land a job in a deep recession, she went back to school to study something more practical: cartography, which provided a springboard into drafting and design, her current career. After getting married, Elaine and her husband moved west, joining her brother Jack '82 in Calgary. She and her husband Todd still live in Calgary with their two children, Rhianon and Evan, both of whom attended the Calgary Waldorf School. Elaine presently works in an engineering firm in the oil and gas business, but most enjoys being at home with her family.



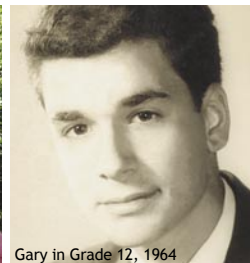
Nils in Grade 11, 1987

**Nils Junge '88** was born in Germany in 1969 and moved to Toronto when he was six. He attended TWS from kindergarten through Grade 12, aside from eleventh grade, when he attended the Detroit Waldorf High School in its final year of existence. Nils and his wife Nevila, whom he met while working in Albania, live in Washington, DC (when he's not traveling). They both work on poverty-related issues: she as a clinical social worker for a charity organization for people recovering from alcohol and drug abuse; he as a consultant in international development. For the past several years Nils has been visiting different parts of the world to assess the social impacts of government policies and make recommendations on improving people's lives. Trying to answer questions like: How will the poor be affected if Malawi lowers its tariff duties? What is the impact of 12+ hours of daily blackouts on Lebanon's households? What will happen to the workers if Ukraine shuts down more coal mines? etc.

Class of 1994  
Victoria Composite High School, BC

Tad in Grade 9, 1991

Since 2001, **Tad Hargrave** has been running Radical Business, a marketing consulting business for "green," locally owned, sustainable, holistic, life-affirming and otherwise conscious entrepreneurs who are struggling with their cash flow, not attracting as many clients as they want, who don't "love" the idea of marketing (even if they love their business). He does the majority of his events on a pay-what-you-can basis so that they can be affordable to all. He is a founding member of BALLE Canada and also of Edmonton's green business network E-Sage. Tad's work has been featured in publications from the Edmonton Journal, The Edmonton Sun, The Globe and Mail, Alberta Report, IONS Review, Ed Magazine, React magazine and nationally on CBC Radio. He was recently featured in the book Global Uprising and was chosen as one of the thirty leading young visionaries in North America by Utne Reader magazine in their September 2002 edition. He attended the Edmonton Waldorf School.

Class of 1964  
Kingston High School, Kingston, NY

Gary in Grade 12, 1964

**Gary Kobran** started his teaching career during graduate school where he taught college French. After obtaining an MA in French, he found a position as a high school mathematics teacher near Buffalo, NY. Having known about Rudolf Steiner for some time, he visited the Toronto Waldorf School in the early 1970s and it was then that he knew he had to become a Waldorf teacher. He studied for one year at Emerson College in England and then took a job as a specialist teacher at TWS in 1974. After three years he became a class teacher and taught that class from Grade 1 to Grade 8. After graduation he took a sabbatical, which has now lasted for twenty-four years! He has pursued a career in insurance since his Waldorf days, but his love for Waldorf education and his study of the work of Rudolf Steiner are still central in his life. Along with that, he is very proud of his wife and his three children and he is totally nuts about his two grandchildren.



**Kierstin Henrickson '93** is a true Waldorfian after thirteen years at TWS. After a brief jaunt on the West Coast, and many visits since, capturing the mountains and the ocean on film, working as a vegetarian cook, organic gardener, and frame builder, Kierstin made her way back to complete her B.F.A. at Ryerson University, in the Photographic Arts Department. Kierstin's business, Artecaphoto, has been growing over the past ten years, along with her fine art photography. While her photography business was growing, she explored many more jobs: Canada post letter carrier, indie film actor, office temp; then she was introduced to Hot Yoga. After practicing for many years, in 2006 she trained in Moksha Yoga and has been teaching full-time since then at three studios in Toronto. Yoga is an integral part of her life, and something she would not live without. The combination of photography and yoga brings great joy and satisfaction on this life journey. info@artecaphoto.com www.artecaphoto.com



Kierstin in Nursery, 1979

Class of 1984  
Victoria Composite High School,

**Jessica Lindeman** is an educator who lives and works in Peterborough, Ontario. She founded Rowan Tree Preschool in 2003 and has worked as its guiding force for the last six years. She strives to foster in her students a sense of wonder and awe for the natural world around them. She uses story telling, artistic expression and music to unleash the power of imagination and play in the children. Jessica grew up in Spring Valley, New York, and attended the Green Meadow Waldorf School. Later, she moved to Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School where she graduated from eighth grade in 1981. Both her parents were Waldorf teachers. Her father, Bill Lindeman, taught for twenty-five years at Green Meadow Waldorf School. She is a cellist and member of the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra and also the member of two trios, including the Stringwood Trio.

LUKE WINTJES con't from page 25

are enrichment courses that are not discipline specific. Students attend inter-disciplinary mini-courses that run throughout the year and that is one of the main features of the school. Another thing that happens is that the kids do inter-disciplinary projects that tie together, for instance in their business course, their geography course, and their English course. The school is really creative about trying to break down the disciplinary silos that develop in high school already. We're actively trying to do that." Although the school attempts to attract a cross-section of students, they do require that they be at least moderately good students to handle the challenging course load. The school has a population of about five hundred, which is small by public standards, so it doesn't have the resources to deal with special needs students.

Although Luke was initially hired to teach geography he has been called on to do many things in his years at the school. "Name a social studies or geography or junior science course and I've been involved in some way." He even did a two year stint as the school librarian. "Teachers come and go, but the teachers who have stuck around, the teachers who are the core staff, are people who really care about what's going on there. They really care that they have the freedom to do their own thing and do it well, and they like the idea that what they are doing is inter-connected to what other teachers are doing. There's a lot of collegiality. It's a small school with only a couple of art teachers, a couple of science teachers, and a couple of English teachers, but they are doing it really intensely. We have kids who are going off and doing high level science right out of high school, going on to U of T with great marks doing bio-technology and nano-technology. We also have kids going off to OCAD and doing really well, or doing things like journalism and interesting inter-disciplinary work."

Although Luke is clearly passionate about his work, like most teachers he eventually began to feel burned out, so he and Sheila took a sabbatical during the 07/08 school year. They spent half of the year in Canada, and half traveling. "For whatever reason, going to a Spanish speaking country and learning some Spanish seemed like the thing to do, so we spent time in Spain, Chile, and Argentina."

In September 2007, they headed to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago, a centuries old pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela where the remains of Saint James are said to be buried. "We walked the whole Camino de Santiago as the kick off to our year. We left some things in Bilbao and carried what we needed. It's hot in the day (30 degrees) and down to about 4 degrees at night. It only rained three or four times. We'd start at sunrise or just before, and walk five or six hours. We'd end up somewhere at 3 pm and wash out the clothes we'd worn that day then hang about in the afternoon and chat with people. We stayed in all these villages and medium sized cities and there was tons to see and do. It's a rich way to see a place. The fact that you walk every day certainly gives you time to reflect on the environment, and what life is all about, and what it is we spend our days doing. If nothing else you have to get up in the morning and say, "Why am I doing this?" and you have to come up with some answer, or stop, or go on. Invariably you go on because now you're committed to this thing. It's almost surreal. And it feels really good when you arrive at the cathedral at the end. You

really feel good about having arrived somewhere that you walked 800 km to get to. That's very powerful. I hadn't had that experience before. This pilgrimage has a thousand year history. It really is an ancient landscape and there's an ancient cultural tradition that you're invoking as you're going through it, and you feel it. You feel the oldness of the trail, you walk along Roman roads at one point." In the end it took Luke and Sheila thirty days to walk from St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, France, to Santiago de Compostela.

After returning to Canada to spend Christmas with Luke's family, Luke and Sheila left for South America in January 2007. Their plan was to travel but also to find a volunteer project. They had some leads for some volunteer work in Ecuador but nothing was concrete. Ultimately they never made it out of Chile and Argentina. They quickly discovered that the Spanish in South America is very different than that spoken in Spain because of the various dialects, so they were almost starting from scratch on that front. They traveled, took Spanish classes, and eventually did some volunteer teaching in La Villa, Chile. "Chile is at a very interesting stage because it's only been about ten years since the dictatorship. It's a bit of an economic power in South America. El Presidente is someone they love and it's very pro-democracy. Money is going into education."

Luke had found it very hard to go back to work in September the year before, but after the sabbatical he was quite looking forward to it. He felt recharged and like he had something to give again, which to him means guiding his students by helping them to think about interdisciplinarianism: reaching out intellectually and practically to others and making important links between their lives, the lives of others, and all the ways there are to understand our world.

When I was at OCAD as a mature student on two different occasions I met recent graduates of the Ursula Franklin Academy. When I asked them if they knew Luke Wintjes the students both volunteered that not only did they know him but that he was one of the best teachers they had ever had. In that weird, wonderful Waldorf family way I felt proud of Luke and not surprised to know that he was one of those people who had found a way to apply his principles and values to his life's work. He is touching the lives of countless young people through his teaching. In imparting the value of inter-disciplinary thought and work, he is helping to cultivate a world in which people reach out to and collaborate with each other in true community, like those working within the Waldorf movement are attempting to do. In Luke's view, it is through inter-disciplinary knowledge, and the right social organization of its application, that environmental and social justice issues will be addressed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In other words, in this model, all of us, wherever we are and whatever we are working on, can pull together to create the change that is needed. ■







## Front line officer at 31 Division



by Nils Junge '88  
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photos by Kierstin Henrickson '93  
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days patrolling a bleak, high-crime neighbourhood, where perpetrators and victims are always just a radio call away. Sound appealing? “This,” says Robyn Sutton, class of '90, and a 1<sup>st</sup> class constable with the Toronto Police Service, “is where I’m supposed to be. I feel fortunate to be doing what I do. I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else.” Daily, her profession sends her into the ruptured seams of the social fabric, to keep it from tearing apart completely. As a police officer, society has sanctioned her to deploy her authority and integrity (and her Glock 22 when needed). She’s out on the streets, resolving dangerous situations, delivering up the “bad guys” to justice, and restoring order, if not necessarily harmony.

Social science textbooks like to use the police as an example of a public good, i.e. something everyone wants and needs but which we are reluctant to pay for as individuals. This is because, unlike private goods that we can consume and enjoy ourselves, public goods benefit all society, and not just those who can afford them. Along with amenities like roads, sewers, and national defense, what the police provide – keeping the peace, preventing and fighting crime – are things citizens very much like and need to see government take care of. What this means, in practical terms, is that there are people out there, we call them *public servants* for a reason, who put their lives at risk every time they go to work so the rest of us can sleep at night in the reasonable expectation that our lives and property are safe. Even those who offer a critique of the law-enforcing arm of the state count on this when they are personally in danger’s way, or when their own property is at risk.

Robyn has found her calling in serving in the police force. However, that is not to say

that after TWS, where she completed grades one through ten, she was hell-bent on law enforcement. As for many of us, her career path was circuitous; she only became a police officer at the ripe old age of thirty-four. After graduating from Bayview Secondary School (the transfer from TWS was a form of rebellion, which also met a need to immerse herself in the relative anonymity of the outside world), she was trained as a paramedic at Niagara College. However, she was unable to find work in this field in what was, in 1993, a very tough job market. A summer job at Black’s Photography turned into eight years of not very compelling work, although Robyn did not lack a certain boldness, evident in her involvement in martial arts (she has a black belt in karate). Then one day someone mentioned that the Toronto Police Service needed parking enforcement officers and she said good-bye to Black’s. After three years of writing tickets she moved on and applied to become a police officer, no easy feat given the large numbers of applicants. Vocationally, she’d arrived at her destination.

So it is that Robyn now works as a front line officer in the primary response unit at 31 Division, covering the Jane and Finch area, one of Toronto’s highest crime neighborhoods. She sees on a daily basis human conditions that, in her pre-crime fighting days, she would have preferred not to know about. As a member of a platoon of twenty-six—there are about three hundred officers in the division—she spends her shift in a cruiser, responding to radio calls directing her to a whole panoply of human hurt and misdeeds, from domestic violence to robberies to shootings. Within thirty seconds to five minutes—depending, in part, on whether discretion or flashing lights and blaring sirens are called for—she’s on the spot. During evening and night shifts she patrols with a partner, and can always call on more back-up, which appears in seconds. Once at the scene, the adrenaline is flowing, all senses shift into high alert. What is really going on? Is anyone armed? Anyone injured? What are people’s intentions? Do I need to draw my gun? Are they going to run?

Robyn points out that respect for the law and its enforcers is not a standard character trait among those willing or desperate enough to commit crimes, and officers experience considerable stress and tension during their duties. Awareness at all times of where the suspect’s hands are is key. And, of course, sometimes police don’t even know where the suspect is. Once Robyn and her partner lost sight of two guys armed

with knives they’d chased into a nearby hydro field. Guns were drawn. Hearts were pounding. But the weather took clear sides that day—it was freezing cold and the officers soon spied the suspects’ breath wafting above the tall grasses, pinpointing their whereabouts. Gotcha!

However, Robyn says it is much more than just the adrenaline rush, defusing dangerous situations, and disarming suspects that makes the work of a police officer fulfilling. It is being able to help people—by protecting them, preventing crime and ensuring safety in the community. This is what she finds most rewarding.

What kind of work conditions can you expect if you join the Toronto Police? Although the minimum age to join the Toronto Police is eighteen, there is a preference for people with some life experience and the average starting age is twenty-seven. Eight to ten hour shifts, seven days in a row, day, evening or night. In between, four to six days off, during which you may still be called in for court appearances. Robyn describes the shift work as brutal on the body, which is in a constant state of adjustment, especially as she gets older. She gets through her shift by drinking copious amounts of caffeinated beverages, but forgoes the donuts and remains slim and fit. It can take a toll on one’s social life as well, and divorce rates are high among police officers. Nonetheless, in 2008 the Toronto Police Services was named one of Greater Toronto’s top employers.

To relax and get away from the pressure of work, Robyn travels whenever she gets a chance, and rides a motorcycle (a Suzuki GSXR 600). At home she has a Maltese named Gilbert. She also volunteers as a Big Sister, spending one day every few weeks hanging out with her little sister.

Female officers account for a small but significant minority of the force and I asked her what it means to be a woman in this profession. Generally speaking, she says gender is a non-issue in this day and age within the force. But on the street, she believes that as a woman officer she does have a calming effect on people. She has often been able to de-escalate confrontational situations which



threatened to boil over.

Has her profession changed her in any way? Has working as a police officer affected her identity? On the positive side, she says her problem-solving skills have been sharpened. She has developed patience and learned to be an authoritative presence. But it comes at a price. Safety, your own and your partner’s, is paramount. “We always go home at the end of our shift, we tell each other.” Trust among fellow officers is crucial. Trust in anybody else one learns to live without. “I’m much more aware of my surroundings. And I’ve become more cynical, I guess. Nothing seems to surprise me anymore,” she admits. “I used to be extremely accepting, ‘peace, love and harmony,’ and all that. Not so much any more.” But she says attending a Waldorf school was an experience that nourished many qualities that she draws on in her work. First among them, treating others with respect and as individuals with rights even when they are on the wrong side of the law.

Yet, while the Waldorf environment is a world away, and she may no longer believe in the *inevitability* of peace, love, and harmony, in a way she spends her life *making* such a vision a little more viable. Through her profession, through her authority and her actions, Robyn brings order and justice to places where desperation and dysfunction spill over into violence. She and her fellow officers are at the core of an institution that enables the rest of us, rich and poor and everyone in between, to get on with our lives. ■







by Anna Purcell '91  
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## A Duck and an Anthroposophist Walk into a Bar...

photos courtesy of Gavin Stephens  
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I'm looking at Gavin Stephens on Youtube. He's wearing a mini skirt and a blond wig. Armed with only a toy stuffed dog, he is effectively stymieing an international expert on HIV/AIDS using a pink Barbie fog of random association pop-culture run amok. It's really dumb, and I'm laughing.

What on earth is comedy about?

Many experts have offered their explanations, but the basic nature of what's funny and why remains elusive and coyly specific to the moment. The influential Greek philosopher, Aristotle, wrote his famous treatise on tragedy more than two thousand years ago, but his rumoured work on comedy was lost in antiquity, if it was ever written at all, leaving us with a lot of questions about humour—plus a literary cannon that ennobles the serious, literal, and morally instructive, while dismissing the comedic as inconsequential, low-brow entertainment at best, and dangerously disrespectful at worst. The solidarity of shared laughter can quickly become subversive, after all, and powerful states are notoriously humourless.

A healthy, functioning society needs comedy to define the borders of discourse by displaying how and where to cross them, so that we not only deepen our understanding of

those borders, but also take a chance on the idea that maybe those borders are too tight or too loose. And so the appeal of comedy endures all efforts to squelch it—probably because whether it comforts, or distracts, breaks the ice, creates community, or topples regimes, it's fun and has been shown to be good for our health. In fact, a good laugh produces an elevated heart rate similar to spending ten minutes on a rowing machine. It reduces stress hormones, and releases the same happy-chemicals in the brain as eating a good meal or having good sex.

But, where does this leave me and Gavin, now prancing his stuffed dog up the torso of the baffled HIV expert on my computer screen? How does someone choose to go into a career based on something as potentially important, but ephemeral and difficult to define, as being funny? It turns out he just knew.

Ever the class clown, he saw a live stand-up routine in high school and decided then and there to become a comic. Months after graduating from TWS in '93 he dove into the open mic circuit and has been swimming there ever since. He has been up to other stuff, too: he was voted by Star TV as one of the twelve funniest Canadians, and for the past five years has worked as a writer and performer on CTV's sketch comedy show, *Comedy Inc.*, for which he received a 2007 Gemini nomination for Best Ensemble Performance in a Comedy Series. He has filmed multiple one-man specials for The Comedy Network's series, *Comedy Now*, has been a featured comedian on Myspace.com, produced a cd of his own material called "Real State," and has taken his stand-up acts to England, the US, and South Africa. He's a busy guy.

Writer E.B. White once said that "humour can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind." Nevertheless, I want those guts and ask Gavin what comedy is about.

"It's about rebellion. Comedians have a right to say what you can't say and question." He goes on to mention Lenny Bruce, the art of questioning the propaganda that entertainment so often is. "You need the court jester to hold up the mirror," Gavin explains, "It's shocking to people's system to hear the stuff we accept and take for granted being



Gavin in Grade 12

### Anthroposophical jokes

Question: How many anthroposophists does it take to screw in a light bulb?  
Answer: No one knows. Steiner never gave an indication.

Question: How many Waldorf teachers does it take to screw in a light bulb?  
Answer: Seven: One to lead the gnome song, one to light a candle, one to strum the lyre, one to write a formal request, two to review the formal request, and one to lead the closing song.

Question: How many Waldorf elementary students does it take to screw in a light bulb?  
Answer: None, it isn't in the curriculum until the upper grades.

Question: How many Waldorf parents does it take to screw in a light bulb?  
Answer: Two: one to ask the teacher if they are supposed to use candles instead, and one to screw it in anyway.

questioned through humour. Why do we accept it? And why do we get offended? Comedy's a social experiment."

Keeping this issue's theme of outreach in mind, I ask Gavin if comedy has ever taken him somewhere unexpected.

"Yeah, tons of places. Audiences confess things." I ask him what he means. "Well, my show's very personal and intimate, and it's very weird and open and the audience sometimes spontaneously confesses things. They become funny, too. It's like a different brain-state. The room becomes one, and no one's defined by what they do, everyone's family. The room is one." So, is comedy important? "Yes! Humour defines us. It connects people, and expands the human condition. Being one...the machine doesn't like that. Money structure and power structure don't like that. You unplug people from the system—it's very Matrix—and you're letting them know they're truly human."

I ask Gavin if there is anything he wouldn't joke about. "It's not *what* I wouldn't joke about, it's *how* I wouldn't." He goes on to describe his distaste for mean, aggressive humour, for easy humour that defends the status-quo. You can single someone out in the audience and make everyone laugh at their expense and kind of ruin

their evening for everyone else's enjoyment, or you can have them in on the joke so that they see the humour, too.

"If you have nothing to say, and are just trying to get a laugh, it's garbage. It's just propaganda. 'I just need a laugh' is whoring yourself. You're just a shell. No voice. You don't care. Meaningless celebrity is just a commercial. And the desperation always shines through, it'll never go somewhere true, it's just staying at what works. It can make a lot of money, though."

While researching comedy for this article, I came across an academic who states that humour, along with games, puzzles, and sports, is one of humanity's tools for survival. Being the ridiculously defenseless creatures that we are, we have excelled and prospered not by brute strength, claw or shell, but almost purely by our wits: wits vitally honed by the bright understanding, unique connections, and quick reflexes demanded by joking around. Gavin seems to thrive in this invigorating realm of double meanings and surprise endings. The jester role suits him well. But he also quickly becomes philosophical about live humour's ability to create an environment where, for a moment at least, we surrender our differences and have a good laugh in shared recognition of our humanity.

And if this sounds good to you, in spring 2010 Gavin is performing his one-man show, called "Spectacular! Spectacular!" in the Toronto area, where he lives. Longer range plans for Gavin include continuing to work on his stand-up routine, his first love, with the hopes of extending it to two hours, getting it in the North American fringe festival circuit, and ultimately taking it to the Edinburgh fringe. Gavin is also busily writing a screenplay—a comedy about a frustrated do-gooder who becomes something of a neighbourhood batman, battling apathy and petty crime. He's working on two comic book ideas based on his life, personal experiences, and stand-up routine, and is enhancing his internet presence through nerd-porn.

Just kidding.

Except about the porn.

Just kidding.

You can find Gavin at gavinstephens.ca (check out his tour dates!), and on Facebook. ■

**The jokes below were identified by a study performed by Laugh Lab (laughlab.co.uk). According to Laugh Lab's study, jokes submitted that contained 103 words were funniest.**

The funniest joke according to Canadians:  
When NASA first started sending up astronauts, they quickly discovered that ballpoint pens would not work in zero gravity. To combat the problem, NASA scientists spent a decade and \$12 billion to develop a pen that writes in zero gravity, upside down, underwater, on almost any surface including glass and at temperatures ranging from below freezing to 300 C. The Russians used a pencil.

The funniest joke according to Americans:  
A man and a friend are playing golf one day at their local golf course. One of the guys is about to chip onto the green when he sees a long funeral procession on the road next to the course. He stops in mid-swing, takes off his golf cap, closes his eyes, and bows down in prayer. His friend says: "Wow, that is the most thoughtful and touching thing I have ever seen. You truly are a kind man." The man then replies: "Yeah, well we were married 35 years."

The funniest joke in Belgium:  
Why do ducks have webbed feet?  
To stamp out fires.  
Why do elephants have flat feet?  
To stamp out burning ducks.

The funniest Joke in Germany:  
A general noticed one of his soldiers

behaving oddly. The soldier would pick up any piece of paper he found, frown and say: "That's not it" and put it down again. This went on for some time, until the general arranged to have the soldier psychologically tested. The psychologist concluded that the soldier was deranged, and wrote out his discharge from the army. The soldier picked it up, smiled and said: "That's it."

The funniest joke according to the UK:  
A woman gets on a bus with her baby. The bus driver says: "That's the ugliest baby that I've ever seen. Ugh!" The woman goes to the rear of the bus and sits down, fuming. She says to a man next to her: "The driver just insulted me!" The man says: "You go right up there and tell him off—go ahead, I'll hold your monkey for you."

The funniest joke according to kids:  
Knock knock. Who's there? Poop!  
(Yes, that's the whole joke.)



by Declan O'Driscoll '93  
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Transcribed by Leah Weber

photos courtesy of Ariel Nasr  
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Good Morning, Kandabar is a documentary that asks the question, What is life like for young Afghan-Canadians when the country they live in is at war in their homeland? The film is directed by Ariel Nasr, a TWS alumnus who is currently living in Kabul, Afghanistan, working as a

**Declan:** So, how did you begin your path as a filmmaker?

Ariel:  
I got into film later in life. I was twenty-six before I ever considered film-making as an option. First, I wanted to be a farmer, so I spent a couple of years working on farms. I spent an entire year as an apprentice. It's something I had always done as a teenager, I'd work on farms in the summers. After a while, I became interested in having my own place, my own homestead. Unfortunately, I was injured one winter and had to stop doing farm work. By the time the next spring came along there was a lot of work to do, but my injury stopped me from being able to complete it so I had to find something else to do. I went to school, to King's College in Halifax. I thought I'd just do one year and then go back to the farm, but I got interested and ended up doing a full degree, a BA in history, finishing in 2005. Towards the end of my degree, I thought about going into law, then suddenly I had a change of heart. I was going through some tough personal stuff and I realized what I really wanted to do was tell stories. So I gravitated towards film and started making documentaries.

**Declan:** What type of documentaries inspired you?

Ariel:  
At first I made documentaries with friends. It was a good experience because we had an audience and we had funding. We focused on social/political issues. We made a film about student funding. We traveled a lot for it, it was fun to shoot, and a lot of fun to do. We ended up showing it to the Nova Scotia government; it got picked up and used as a lobby tool. My experience showed me that one can actually do something with documentaries, make some kind of difference, and it's a creative way of telling stories that are engaging. After that, I just got more and more fascinated with making documentaries. I think it was the editing that really caught my attention at first. Somehow it felt similar to the process of dreaming. It felt really comfortable for me. I began doing it for other people. I had no real training and not much experience, but I kind of just put up a shingle and started telling people I was an editor. People gave

me projects and asked me to work for next to nothing, which I did. After about six months, I actually started to get jobs that paid a little bit. Soon it was enough to live on! That was encouraging; so I continued.

**Declan:** What led you to writing and directing?

Ariel:  
Well, during that time I was always making my own documentaries and my own shorts. I also created multi-media for stage plays. I did anything that I could. Eventually I got a job as assistant editor at the National Film Board. As soon I got there I started bothering them to let me direct a film. I used to work the night shift. I remember, I'd be there alone. Often when you're assistant editing what you're doing is logging footage, digitizing footage, which in a way is the worst kind of job you could have—it's boring as hell—but in another way it affords you time to do other things. And, if you're at the National Film Board or somewhere where high quality films are made, you can watch all the footage, all the out-takes, and learn how documentaries are made. I used to rifle through the garbage/recycling bin to find shooting scripts and proposals. Every minute I spent at the Film Board I spent trying to learn—I would read the technical manuals and anything else I could find. After working at the NFB, I did a little gig for the CBC and I started to get more editing gigs that paid well. Soon I started sending my own ideas for a film to an executive producer at the Atlantic studio of the NFB. He told me there was a national call for proposals from film-makers of colour. As an Afghan Canadian, I qualified. But first I had to get the interest of a producer. My proposal was picked up by an NFB producer from Halifax and put into the pool of submissions. It went through a long process of development and different stages of proposal writing. We put together a research proposal, then a development package, and finally submitted the film with a budget. To my surprise, it won the funding competition. So I was able to make my film.

**Declan:** What is the film about?

Ariel:  
*Good Morning, Kandabar* is really a discussion about the relationship between Afghanistan and Canada, through the perspective of Afghan-Canadians. It looks at the debate over whether Canada should be in Afghanistan, and questions what we're doing there. The film follows three individuals whose stories are related thematically and the narrative thread is my own curiosity and my own struggle to understand the relationship between the two countries. My stimulus—other than just being Afghan—was the war in Afghanistan. Early on in the war, when we started to hear news of civilian casualties coming from Coalition Forces bombing in villages, I took it really hard. I was a kid in the '80s when the Jihad against the Soviet army was happening and of course I was horrified and enthralled by those stories. There were so many civilian casualties from those years you can't even count them—over a million dead in Afghanistan. But this time it was different because I was

cont'd page 34

class of '97

# Ariel Nasr

The Power of Storytelling: *Good Morning, Kandahar*



Ariel in Grade 3

Ariel Nasr directing a documentary about the food-security crisis in Afghanistan for a Kabul-based production company. In this photo, he is in Sar-e-Pol province, Northern Afghanistan, January 2009.



Milk War synopsis:

Declan O’Driscoll ’90 is producer/executive producer of *Milk War*. The film follows the plight of biodynamic dairy farmer Michael Schmidt who refuses to pasteurize his milk. Michael has been providing farm fresh, raw milk to a small community in Ontario since 1992. In Canada, the sale of raw milk has been strictly prohibited since 1991. Canada is the only G8 country that prohibits it.

On November 21<sup>st</sup> 2006 Michael’s farm was raided by 20 armed officers, his equipment was seized, all dairy products were destroyed and farmer Schmidt was charged with 20 criminal offences for distributing unpasteurized milk. Two days later Schmidt began a hunger strike, with the demands that his equipment be returned and the government look at revising the law. His fight became one about civil liberties. A court case has ensued and Michael Schmidt represented himself against eight government lawyers.



ARIEL NASR con’t from page 33

older; at an age where I thought I could do something. And it was my country that was in Afghanistan this time—so there is this kind of conflict that’s in the film: “my country is at war with my father’s country.”

Declan: How does Waldorf education and TWS fit into all of this?

Ariel:

I had a really great teacher, Mr. Robins, Gregg Robins, who now teaches in downtown Toronto at the Alan Howard Waldorf School. He is a great storyteller—for me, in some ways, it is more about the storyteller than the story itself. A deep love of stories was instilled in me and it’s something that has stayed with me. Mr. Robins was such a great storyteller, he’d intersperse his stories with music, songs, and drama. We listened to his stories for hours, our heads on our desks. We’d just sit there listening. I don’t think he had any discipline problems with us; we just sat there and listened, enthralled. Later my class ended up being a bit wild; we were a bit harder to manage for other teachers. I think it was sort of like this dysfunctional family. We lost our father figure when Mr. Robins left because of his glaucoma. Those of us who had been there during that period, I think, never really got over losing this great storyteller. For me, anyway, that was the case. He was such a powerful storyteller. All of my childhood, the parts of my education that stand out, the ones I can remember clearly, are listening to stories—not just at the Waldorf school, and school in general, but even at my violin lessons. I would go—I hated the lesson, I always felt a bit guilty for not having worked harder—but the moment my teacher started telling stories about his own Romanian violin teacher, I would forget about the violin and sink into the story. All throughout my childhood that was the case. I think that’s why, when I was going through some hard times in my

twenties, I came back to storytelling. That, to me, was the real value of the Waldorf school. As far as something that stuck with me, it was the storytelling, listening to all those stories.

Declan: When you were a child, did you hear stories from or about Afghanistan?

Ariel:

Tons of stories from my dad—stories about my grandfather who was a tribal leader in a rural area of Herat. My dad had a privileged upbringing as the son of a local leader. He loved to tell stories about how the tribal justice system worked and about some of the kind-hearted things his father did for the village where they lived. As I got older I developed different perspectives on these stories and I continue to develop different perspectives on them now that I’ve been to Afghanistan. So, it’s interesting—and that’s my heritage. I only have my dad and a few cousins who really have those memories. So those stories are really valuable and very precious to me.

I was very happy to spend the morning with Ariel. As a fellow filmmaker and a fellow Waldorfian, I feel that we indeed share a passion for storytelling, the way in which human beings reach out to each other. These days I also tell stories through the medium of moving images. Currently I am a television producer at Stornoway Communications in Toronto. Currently I am producing a documentary called *Milk War* about Michael Schmidt’s battle to legalize the sale of unpasteurized, farm fresh milk in Canada. The film is set to be released on ichannel in November 2009. ■

For more information about *Good Morning, Kandahar*, please Google it or check out this website to see the trailer of the film: <http://www3.nfb.ca/webextension/good-morning-kandahar>

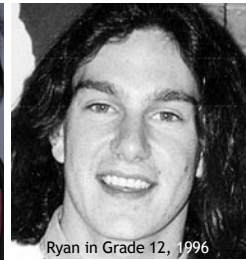
Ariel with Afghan-Danish producer, Hadi Mojaddedi



CONTRIBUTORS cont’d



Class of 1996  
John McGregor SS, Chatham, On



Ryan in Grade 12, 1996



Juniper in Grade 8, 1996

Before becoming the Toronto Waldorf School’s Marketing Coordinator in 2005, through which he has led implementation of the school’s website, branding, and outreach strategies, **Ryan Lindsay** was the administrator at Singing Winds Waldorf School in Chicago. Previous to that, he completed his Waldorf teacher training in New Zealand, atop a mountain overlooking the sea and wineries, where he still swears he lived his most recent incarnation. Ryan is also president of the Waldorf School Association of Ontario (WSAO) and his ambition is to make Waldorf education a well-known and generously funded brand across Canada, enabling every family who wants a Waldorf education for their children to get a low-tuition Waldorf education. Outside of Waldorf education, Ryan has managed campaigns for the Green Party and saves his money and time for travelling, most recently a hike to Machu Picchu.



Laura in Grade 5, 1978



Declan in Grade 5, 1986

**Declan O’Driscoll ’93** attended the Toronto Waldorf School between the years 1982 and 1985. In the 1990s, he went to high school at the Vancouver Waldorf School. Declan tells stories through the medium of television. He is currently a television producer at Stornoway Communications in Toronto, where he is the senior producer for the national television station, bpm.tv. He is producer/executive producer of *Milk War*, a documentary about bio-dynamic farmer Michael Schmidt, whose farm was raided in November 2006 by twenty armed officers because of the sale of organic raw milk, and Schmidt’s battle to legalize the sale of unpasteurized, farm fresh milk in Canada. The film is set to be released in the near future. Stay tuned!

**outofbounds** records TWS’s and the alumni/ae community’s history by keeping track of graduates and members of the graduating class, noting the yearly comings and goings of faculty and staff, highlighting the school’s and the alumni/ae associations’s special events and day-to-day activities, as well as featuring the life stories of alumni/ae and faculty/staff. **Outofbounds** is expensive to produce as we have been aiming for quality so that the magazine lasts on your bookshelf and can be of interest to you and your family and friends for years to come. **Please support the publication if you can.** At the time of going to print, we raised \$7,000, not quite enough to reach our goal of \$10,000. See inside back cover for some ways that you can help us, including a voluntary subscription fee. Remember, no gift is too small. **CONTACT** Catherine Daugherty, the school’s Development Officer, at [cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.com). **TO GIVE** go to [torontowaldorfschool.com](http://torontowaldorfschool.com) and click on “Support Us” (the actual tab).



Ruta in Grade 10, 1979

To her great chagrin **Ruta Moroch ’81** has had to grow up. With four kids ranging in ages from eleven to twenty and a full-time job assisting kids with special needs, her free spirit is still in there; it’s just covered with layers of responsibility. Ruta is the ultimate mom, who can sew a costume in a flash and cook a meal in a minute for her typical family gatherings of twenty or more. She relies on her kossak husband to keep her grounded and is grateful for his dedication to dance; all four children participate in Ukrainian folk dancing. Ruta amazed herself by stepping out of her comfort zone to write an article for this publication! She is grateful to her sister-in-law, Sara Anderson ’85 (TWS’s alumni/ae coordinator), for egging her onto Facebook to play Scrabble and for her help in “birthing” her pysanka story. Ruta has finally caught up with new technology and has found old friends on-line, though don’t expect any prompt e-answers, she’s busy getting her hands dirty in the garden or the kitchen...



Agathe in Grade 2, 1969

**Agathe Polach** has been teaching French at the Toronto Waldorf School since 1994. At the ripe old age of seventeen, she moved from Quebec to Vancouver to get better acquainted with the anglophone version of her country. There, she learned English, worked, met her future husband, and their son Luca was born. After ten years in this idyllic hiking paradise, she started university after their move to Nova Scotia, and completed her degree in translation and English and French literature at the University of Toronto. A chance encounter with a Waldorf family while living in Nova Scotia led her to teach French, first at the Alan Howard Waldorf School and soon thereafter at TWS. It also led to a wonderful education for her son who was at TWS from Grade 1 through to Grade 12. To this day, she is very grateful for being able to teach her language from the deeper perspective that a Waldorf education offers.

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# What's Your Passion?

alumni/ae,

## class of '81 Ruta Moroch

### The Ritual of Pysanka: A Written Tradition Reaching into the Past

Ukrainian Catholic Church, is the blessing of a basket on Easter morning. It is filled with smoked meat, ham, cheese, butter, horseradish, braided bread, and beautifully painted eggs. Pagan eggs. These decorated eggs are a labour of love. The eggs are “written” like a story. Each egg has a mystic combination of colour and design. Symbols are used as code to the secrets of culture: stylized symbols of ancient gods, fertility, sun, everlasting life, strength, wealth and prosperity.

Every stroke drawn on the egg has significance. Straight lines encircling the egg mean eternity, no beginning or ending. A meandering line emphasizes harmony and motion. The colours used to decorate have meaning as well: yellow represents wisdom, youth, harvest; red denotes action, spiritual awakening, the joy of life and love; green indicates fertility, health, and hope. I get excited at the prospect of writing my Easter eggs each year.

I begin by purchasing ten dozen eggs from the market. I empty them of yolk and egg white and use this to make the special Easter bread. Rifling through the many Ukrainian Easter egg books I've collected over the years, I begin to choose which designs I will write. I'm always amazed by the designs that jump out at me. How could I have missed this one or that one last year? They are so beautiful!

I begin. I heat the stylus over a candle flame and fill the nib with beeswax. As I draw the dividing lines on the egg, the wax dries instantly, sealing the surface. Next I draw the outlines of the design. Now for colour: I dip the egg in a jar of dye, swirling it around until it's nice and bright.

Always start with lighter colours and move to darker. Now the egg is yellow. I fill my stylus with wax again, heat it over the candle and

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by Ruta Moroch (Jacin) '81  
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photos by Katja Rudolph '84  
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The word pysanka, meaning Easter egg, is derived from the Ukrainian verb “to write.” Pysanky (say *PIS-an-keh*) is the plural.

Early March. It feels like winter, yet soon it will be March Break, surely a sign that spring is on its way. And Lent is about to start. We will adjust our habits to suit: eat no meat, find activities other than watching TV, clean the house thoroughly. Some traditions are new, some old, and some ancient.

It moves me to reflect on the fact that centuries ago my ancestors did as I do today: rejoice in the coming of spring and the awakening of Earth. In years past, they celebrated and gave thanks for making it through the frozen months of the year, when the earth slept. Today I celebrate the same, and also think about how our habits impact the world around us. Imagine eating locally year round, like my ancestors did. What, no strawberries in February?

One of many ancient traditions honoured by our church, St. Elias





RUTA MOROCH con't from page 37

write. I repeat this many times, making sure that all the parts that are to stay yellow are covered with wax. Then I move on to the next colour. I heat the stylus, scoop the wax, and write. The repetition and scent of beeswax calm my soul.

I am amazed by how much meaning this ritual had for my ancestors; I certainly don't pop an egg into the hen house to encourage laying or scatter ground egg shells on the roof to ward off evil, yet I copy these designs. I feel it connects me to humanity, to Earth. It takes me back to a simpler time. I'm writing a craft I don't fully understand with my head but am so comfortable with in my soul. And I'm grateful for the bond it helped create between my mother and me when I was a child. I helped her make the dozens upon dozens of eggs that she would show and sell around Toronto.

I love the way my youngest son is impatient to start writing eggs. He's the one who gets me motivated. The older children each make an egg for the basket, as well. It's tradition. My younger daughter chooses carefully. My older daughter asks: "Mom, were you good at making eggs when you were my age?"

"Yes," I answer, "because I helped my mum and learned from all my mistakes."

"Well, when I have kids, I'm going to send them to you to write eggs. I don't have the patience for it."

I'm happy she feels it's an important tradition to retain and I still have a few years to give her the opportunity to practice. It's my eldest son who willingly helps me with my own eggs. As I write, he dyes my eggs for me. I am grateful for the opportunity to connect with my teenaged boy.

Each egg is beautiful in its own way: the simple ones with their deep symbolism as well as the very intricate ones, which take hours to write. It's magic when the colours vibrantly reappear as the wax is melted and carefully wiped off. There is always a moment of anticipation before it is revealed how the design has turned out. Not every egg is perfect. Sometimes a colour doesn't take very well. Maybe some wax dropped where you didn't want it. Perhaps your lines aren't as even as you'd like. But this just adds to the unique beauty of each egg.

On Saturday night we pack the baskets. Embroidered linens line each one. The rich Easter bread is placed in the centre and adorned with periwinkle ivy. Butter is smoothed into a glass and decorated with cloves. Horseradish is peeled. Regular eggs are boiled. Rings of kolbassa arranged. The kids insist that gold bunnies be included! The pysanky are gently and prominently placed. Our baskets are put in the car, ready for our 5:30 am departure.

The next morning, we watch the sun rise as we drive to church, the onion domes appearing on the horizon as we get closer. Inside, mass has begun. The kids complain because mass is three hours long, but they manage to get through it. Everyone's basket is arranged along the outside of the courtyard. After mass the priest comes around to bless the baskets and people with holy water. It is a joyous occasion.

I always have a few extra pysanky in my basket for friends. That's what they're really meant for: good wishes, reaching out to others. Soon we will break fast with our families with the blessed food from our baskets. ■

Visit St. Elias' website for information: <http://www.saintelias.com>



## Reaching Out in Support of the Arts

by *Juniper Locilento (Knapp) '90*  
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*photos courtesy of Juniper*

I left the Toronto Waldorf School in 1986. I hadn't returned in over twenty years when I visited again in December of 2008. Walking through the front doors immediately took me back in time. The sights, sounds, and smells brought a flood of memories: the foyer that my parents tiled, the curved hallway leading to the girls' bathroom, the ropes in the gym that I could never manage to climb, the "sick room" in the main office—everything took me back. When I asked for a glass of water, I was directed to the teacher's lounge and entered with trepidation, thinking, "I'm not supposed to be here. What if Mr. Haller sees me?"

I had come to the school that day to meet with Development Officer Catherine Daugherty, whose Chair Campaign the previous spring had got me thinking about TWS—how my experiences there had affected my choices from adolescence through adulthood, and how I might be able to give something back to the community that had given me so much. Catherine and I discussed my possible role in helping with TWS's then upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in spring of 2009.

My brief visit to the school showed me that while there have certainly been many physical improvements in the last two decades, at its heart it remains the same. And I, likewise, remain the same girl who graduated from grade eight and left TWS to take on the world.

My passion at that time was singing. I had discovered my voice in sixth grade, under the guidance of two wonderful teachers, Ray and Dorothy Haller. They encouraged me in the pursuit of this passion, recognizing my flair for the dramatic and helping me to channel my energy in positive directions, such as class plays, choir, and singing lessons. At the tender age of twelve, I felt certain that I had discovered my calling and, bolstered by the recognition I received, was determined to conquer



**Juniper**  
class of '90  
**Locilento**

the world at a performing arts high school. I was truly disappointed on that first day when I realized that students wouldn't be dancing in the cafeteria like they did in *Fame*. But I did meet people who were as passionate as I was, and who directed their teenage angst into making art of one kind or another.

I pursued my passion for singing with singular determination for over fifteen years, eventually graduating from the University of Toronto's Opera School. But after pouring all of my energy into one thing for such a long time, I came to the realization that I had outgrown my childhood dream, and was aching to broaden my horizons. Leaving my identity as a singer behind me, I felt liberated from the boundaries I'd imposed on myself for so many years. I let my passions lead me to a fuller and more satisfying life. I managed a restaurant, toyed with cooking school, and volunteered as a Big Sister. I tried rowing, kayaking, soccer, yoga, backcountry camping, and discovered a particular love for distance running, completing two half marathons and one full marathon.

As for my professional life, it was not long before passion brought me back to where I'd



JUNIPER LOCILENTO con't from page 39

begun—the arts. This time around, I'm not the performer on stage but one of the many who work behind the scenes. As a fundraiser, I reach out to those who have both the resources and inclination to support a particular cause. To be a good fundraiser, it helps if it's a cause you're passionate about. My role is to talk to people about why the arts matter, how they enrich our community, and how we can each play a role in ensuring that the arts thrive by supporting arts organizations and the work that they do in the community. This is truly a cause I'm passionate about. In fundraising, we talk about the "fit." Whether a prospective donor is interested in the work of an unsung Canadian composer, or fostering literacy through Shakespeare, or the production of a new play, I need to show them how their gift can make that particular project happen. For a girl who grew up on stage, and who has experienced the life of an artist and a teacher, this job really is a perfect fit.

In my current position at Soulpepper Theatre Company, I work closely with all three levels of government to secure support for our activities. In broad terms, this means staying abreast of activities in the political arena and ensuring that the arts have a voice in Ottawa and at Queen's Park. In more specific terms, it means identifying funding opportunities and determining how best to illustrate the alignment between government policy objectives and the activities that Soulpepper will undertake to achieve these objectives. The past year has been particularly interesting: following a series of controversial cuts last summer, culture became an election issue in the 2008 federal election. There was tremendous momentum and media coverage across the country. Thanks in part to these efforts, today's government has begun to recognize the economic role that culture plays in Canada, as well as its social and educational benefits.

In thinking about the different things that I've been passionate about—from singing to running to volunteering to being an advocate for the arts—I realize that there is a common thread, and that thread is community. The idea of coming together to share an experience with others wasn't new to me, of course, because I'd lived it at an early age at the TWS. In fact, one might even say that my journey in life has been a search for that same sense of community offered at TWS.

It is this search that drew me back to help make the TWS 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in May '09 a success. My primary role was to co-ordinate the live and silent auctions, which ultimately raised over \$30,000 to support the school. I spent countless hours in the school basement receiving, tracking, cataloguing and packaging the many generous donations that came in from the TWS community – right up until the night before the event! It was indeed exciting to be part of this special evening and to work together with the dedicated TWS staff and volunteers to make something worthwhile happen for our community. ■

Juniper and colleague celebrating the fundraising success of Soulpepper's 10th Anniversary Gala, organized by Juniper, at which over \$150,000 was raised.



Running the Scotia Half Marathon



Juniper with little sister Kayzha



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



## WHY SUPPORT OUTOFBOUNDS?

*outofbounds* is the school's most expensive print publication. The school has invested in it generously and would like to continue to do so, but the school is, along with the rest of the world, feeling the economic pinch. We alumni/ae need to kick in with our support. All contributions, big or small, will go directly toward the magazine.

**CONTACT US** Contact Catherine Daugherty, TWS's development officer, at [cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.com](mailto:cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.com) - 905.881.6137 ext. 322.

**TO DONATE** go to [www.torontowaldorfschool.com](http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com), click on "Support Us" (the actual tab), and then on "Donate Now." Or send a cheque to *outofbounds*, Toronto Waldorf School, 9100 Bathurst Street, Thornhill, ON, L4J 8C7

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*My passion for animation started when I did my grade nine practicum at Nelvana Ltd., which is of Beetlejuice, Babar, and Care Bears fame.*



# Magda Eden

class of '04



*by Magda Eden  
magda.eden@gmail.com*

*images of her work courtesy of Magda*

Being a true Waldorf "lifer" (nursery through grade twelve, with a parent who taught there as well), I'd always been very drawn to the arts—drawing, painting, storytelling, acting, etc. I loved it all, but being the shy child I was, I never really flourished on stage the way I dreamed of, even though I had some ideas about how it should be done. I just couldn't get over myself enough to act and play the characters I had in my mind. When I learned that you could act on paper, well, that was it for me! From then on, I used drawing and painting as an outlet for my imagination and the desire to act it out. And that is exactly what an animator is: an actor on paper. If you look it up in the dictionary, to animate means to move, or to bring

to life. An animator for film and television creates a sequence of images, that, when played back at twenty-four frames per second, gives the feeling of time, space, weight, and above all else, the illusion of lifelikeness. It is puppeteering and storytelling on a whole new level, because you can exaggerate and push a character's expression and movements in a way that is just not possible in reality. For example, the character that feels a defeat so crushing that he literally deflates and trickles out of his seat onto the floor.

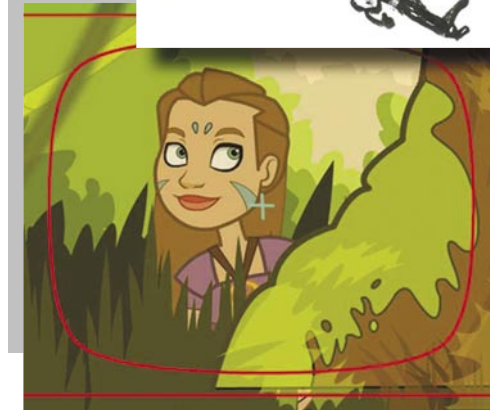
My passion for animation started when I did my grade nine practicum at Nelvana Ltd., which is of Beetlejuice, Babar, and Care Bears fame. I was in awe of the amount of care, effort, creativity, and passion that went into the work, and the outstanding talent I saw there. And I said, "me too!" From then on I dedicated myself to learning the art of animation. I fell in love with everything about the production process, because each was a vital step and a different art form all working towards a finished product: a story that is as visually appealing, effective, and simple as you can make it. Writer and pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupery said it best: "Perfection is finally attained not when there is no longer anything to add but when there is no longer anything you can take away." That can be said of animation, right down to the line of a mouth that changes the entire emotion with a subtle curve in the right place.

Needless to say, the task of making a simple and effective film through drawing is quite an epic undertaking, and usually requires a fair number of people: writers, designers, painters, voice actors, as well as people to manage the whole big mess. Here's a look at what a production line might entail.

First someone will come up with an idea for a character, story, or maybe even a series, and will then write a script. This is just like English class: the writer comes up with a beginning, middle, and end with key plot points to move the story along: conflicts, character arcs, plot twists, and a resolution. She or he has to make sure that viewers come away with something, be it a moral to the story or even the satisfaction of seeing a character learn and grow in a way they can relate to. After a script is written, the design and storyboarding phases begin, usually working off each other. The design team comes up with characters, props, and locations, using different combinations of

shapes and lines to create the style of a show, and underlines the type of characters you're working with. A villain could have very angular shapes and have mute, dark tones, or be soft, doughy, and wear luxurious colours depending on what type of person the character is, and the same applies to backgrounds depending on the mood of the scene and what is the over-all style of the show. The storyboard artist uses the character designs to make a rough draft of what the final product will look like: it establishes the composition of the scenes and some of the key acting poses, and notates camera moves and effects like a fade-out and squiggly lines that transition into a dream sequence. After the storyboard and script are locked down, the voices for the characters and the effects can be recorded. Voice actors are carefully chosen to suit the characters. They provide vital acting clues for the animators. After the sound effects and voices make the final cut they're passed on for the animators to use. Animators use the storyboards and all the "raw" designs to act out the scenes to the audio, like a puppeteer does with puppets: they have to make acting choices regarding how to best convey the story and the way a particular personality might deal with a situation. They make the lips move in sync with the voices, and show weight, emotion, and the characters' relationships to each other—perhaps a small character is yelling at her big goofy counterpart, or a burly bully is threatening a smaller guy; you will always know who is the top dog in the scene because of how it is staged and animated. Without animation, the audio only tells half the story. It's possible to tell a story completely without dialogue if you have the "acting" (animation) cues down properly; however, the same dialogue can be used in a huge array of situations depending on the acting (animation) choices you make. For example, there is an animation contest online called "the 11 Second Club" (<http://www.11secondclub.com>) that offers one audio clip per month, and animators get to design characters and act out a scene, all using the same audio clip. Everyone comes up with a very original vision, and tells a different story depending on what they've done. The same words put in scenes and said by different characters can mean completely different things, even if they sound the exactly the same. The acting of the character is key! After the

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# On the Other Side of the Desk

class of '85

## Laura Nienhuis

### Connecting My Two Worlds

by Laura Nienhuis  
Laura.Nienhuis@tel.tdsb.on.ca

photos courtesy of Laura

Sometimes I look at my life as a teacher and I cannot believe what I am doing. It is so far removed from my own experiences as a student. I decided in my mid-thirties to go to teachers college with the hopes of integrating my knowledge and training as an actor into a life that was more steady and supportive for my family. At the time I did not consider how foreign the public high school system would actually be to me. I attended the Toronto Waldorf School from grades two to eight and continued my high school years at small alternative schools in downtown Toronto, the Annex Village Campus, Ingelnook Alternative School, and The High School for the Performing Arts. When considering high schools I remember being overwhelmed by the prospect of attending a large public school. I was comfortable in small, intimate schools that fostered individuality and freedom of expression.

My first practice placement at teachers college was in a large downtown Toronto high school! It was truly strange that the first time I set foot in a public school classroom was as a teacher. I was in foreign territory. But it was not until I found myself hired the next year, at the same school as a full time teacher, that the culture shock really set in!

I was faced with attitudes and resistances that I had never encountered before. My general sense was that the students did not know how to think for themselves. They seemed not to possess the skills to question, internalize, and disseminate knowledge. They wanted to be told the right answers and often became downright aggressive when I would challenge them to find the answers for themselves. I was disillusioned and very stressed! Challenged physically and threatened emotionally, I basically left work every day feeling like I had been beaten up. I seemed too sensitive and delicate to cope with that magnitude of aggressive and distracted teenagers. Here I was entrenched in an environment that I knew I could not cope with as a child and I was expecting myself to function in it every day as an adult!



I stuck it out, however. It is now seven years later; I am still at the same school and every year I have made changes in myself and my practice to try to bring my worlds together.

A turning point for me occurred when I attended my 20th year class reunion at TWS in June of 2005. My amazing class teacher, Mr. Rudolph, made a speech about his aspirations and hopes as an educator that resonated deeply with me. I cried through the whole thing. I cried because his words touched a deep chord in me, a chord that I had forgotten but so deeply missed. I also cried out of pity and despair for the system I was in and my lack of purpose as an educator.

He said two things that changed me. First, he said that after a day of teaching it is good to reflect on the experiences of that day, the successes as well as the many failures. He said to allow the

failures to go onto a compost heap of the mind and soul. Instead of beating yourself up, put them there and they will ferment and transform and eventually turn into good healthy soil from which new pedagogical growth can occur! Second, he said that what our society tends to neglect is a respect and acknowledgment of the intuitive side of knowing and being. So much of what is programmed into kids and adults is counter-intuitive: we are not taught to listen to and honour our inner selves. We are taught to consume and to succeed in superficial ways that are not focused on developing our inner strength and experience.

Mr. Rudolph's words resonated very deeply with me as a teacher and I left that day with a much clearer sense of who I wanted to be as a teacher and how I could, in my own way, impart these values to my students in the public school environment.

I have since focused on what it can mean to the public system to be an arts educator. I teach drama and a dance program, which I started in our school several years ago. My goal is to inspire students to find their own voices and open their hearts through their creative expression. My classes are about trying to encourage them to hear and value their creative side as much as they value the other parts of themselves, those parts that are privileged and nourished by other departments of the school. I hope that when students leave my classroom they feel that they have met their intuitive selves and have learned to listen to their hearts—to play and to improvise and to communicate—and have begun to value these qualities that are the foundation of the well-being, innovative energy, and openness to the world that will enrich their work and relationships for the rest of their lives. If I have given them even a taste of this I have been successful.

In the concrete jungle in which we spend our lives and the institutional walls in which we abide, the students are making art, and they are creating it themselves. They are dancing from their hearts and acting with their souls. That is how I am integrating my Waldorfian sensibility into my public school persona. ■

MAGDA EDEN con't from page 43

animation is finalized, you have a big party to celebrate the end of the millions of revisions. Then the animation is sent to get edited together and to have special effects like smoke and explosions added, as well as to get all the technical aspects ironed out and a have final polish done to it.

If twenty-four drawings—or frames—make one second of animation one can imagine how many people and how many work hours it takes to make an animated feature of (at least!) seventy minutes. It is a huge amount of work, and I was really impressed and more than a little daunted by how much training is required to get to entry level of the animation industry. But, of course, all things worth doing are a lot of work.

I went to school for three years and became a fairly well rounded artist. As students, we did copious amounts of life drawing; human and animal anatomy; painting and drawing in various media; colour theory; principles of drawing; perspective and structural drawing; character design; layout and background painting; acting and improv; script writing and story telling; and we even studied the history of animation. We drew on the train going to school. We drew each other eating lunch. We drew our pets, and our families watching TV. We drew at the zoo. And at ballet classes. If you were not drawing, you were wasting valuable drawing time! You had to be creative and have a sense of humour and playfulness about your work. I once had a friend who slipped some rude hand signs into his "hands and feet" homework just to get himself to do it and enjoy it. We had a few acting classes in which we actually learned how to play and make believe again: because how can you act it out if you can't even imagine it?

The first year class started out with close to seventy-five people and only eight graduated at the end of the third year. But it was worth every tear and (recycled) tree. I now work with some of the most hilarious, talented, creative, and *nerdy* big kids you could ever wish to meet. It's delightful! We're all very passionate about what we do, and when work isn't fun, we make it fun. It's given me a very strong work ethic, and I take pride in what I do. And as goofy and fun as making cartoons sounds, and all the evils of television and advertising aside, it's a very intense and rewarding job. It truly is an art form, because in addition to all the usual aspects of drawing and painting, you also add acting, rhythm, and flow to the mix. And no other job gives you an excuse to get up and watch cartoons on Saturday morning like this one does.

Some words of wisdom: never let yourself grow up too much. A sense of humour and the ability to play will probably be the best work asset you will ever have. Fun is one of the easiest things in the world to be passionate about, and a sense of humour will carry you through even the roughest times. Ever remember being a kid and pretending your broccoli were trees and you were a giant...just to get the job done? That's what I'm talking about. Mary Poppins was really onto something with her spoonful of sugar. ■





# On the Other Side of the Desk

## Max Dannenberg class of '07

### Teaching Across Borders

by Max Dannenberg  
max\_dannenberg@hotmail.com

photos courtesy of Max

A voice chirps into the microphone, then echoes off the stage and reverberates throughout the crowd. Over eight hundred uniformed Thai students giggle with amusement. I stand happily twirling my thumbs behind my back beside a man who is introducing me. As he finishes, he leans over to me and whispers cheerfully in my ear: “Max, could you introduce yourself with your first lesson for the students?” My happiness disperses in a heart-beat. I am unprepared. I have stage fright. I am terrified.

In January, 2009, I plunged into the engaging, complex, and beautiful world that is Southeast Asia. During my six-month-long travels, I took the time to settle down and experience day to day life in Nong Khai, a small border town close to Laos in northeastern Thailand. It was there that I lived with a small homegrown charity called Isara.

Isara is a charity that works to provide health care, environmental support, and education to the local community. Their website has the signature of a large, long-established, corporate organization. I was nervous throughout the whole application process and my horrendously long and arduous trip to Nong Khai. I arrived in the small train station and was promptly picked up by a very friendly young woman with a big smile named Ming. I was in shock to discover upon arriving at the Isara Learning Center (ILC) that this big corporate organization was in fact a cozy little charity run out of the director’s house. The director, Kirk Gillock, just happens to be an ex–corporate-website designer, which explains a lot.

I taught free English classes in the evenings to a rag-tag group of teenagers and adults, some of whom drove over fifty kilometers just to listen to my novice attempts at the art of teaching. I had as much to learn as they did. In my first class, we played an ice-breaker game to introduce ourselves to each other. I thought they were having a good laugh at my expense as they bombarded me with names like Dream, Boom, Oat, and Meow. I decided to laugh with them and then asked for their real names. I got blank stares. Then one or two students gave me Thai names the length of the dictionary. Meow and Dream it was then, their so-called English names.

As well as teaching at the ILC, I also taught at a high school in a remote rural town called Ban Serm. It was there that I lived and taught with the ever enthusiastic Ram, who so graciously invited me to conduct a class in front of all eight hundred students on my first day. Before I arrived, I thought I would be very professional and ask Ram what supplies I would require and how I should prepare to teach the high school English classes. His reply was, “Max you will just help me, you don’t need to do anything.” This sounded like a great plan. So, after my moment of terror on stage, I followed Ram into our first class together and stood at the back waiting expectantly for him to begin the lesson. I was puzzled when he sat down with the students and looked expectantly at me. There was an awkward pause. Then he said, “Max, just talk to them.” The panic never ends as a teacher, it seems. So, there I was “just talking to them,” rambling on about who knows what, and there they were understanding only one in ten words I said. Yet everyone (but me), it seemed, was very happy with the situation.

Teaching in Ban Serm “with” Ram was an experience I am unlikely to have again. Most of these students did not listen to Western music or watch Western movies, and most had never seen a young Westerner before. The result was that I was an instant and very exotic celebrity, and I really mean this. Students constantly followed me around in great gaggles asking to pose with me for photographs. They desperately wanted my autograph, and I was often faced with a sea of notebooks. I had a personal favorite fan, a young ladyboy who always yelled “I love you” in my direction across the school yard, to everyone’s amusement (ladyboys—“Kathoey”—are boys and men who exhibit varying degrees of femininity, and Thailand is a society which seems to have created a sanctioned social space for this). I attempted to treat this as a normal school-day occurrence. Another ladyboy, named Pancake, always asked me, “Am I beautiful?!”, striking a playboy-poster pose. All these bizarre encounters became normal occurrences very soon, like drinking my morning Ovaltine.

I mainly taught older high school students, and tended to focus on

*It is strange to be teaching after being taught myself for practically the whole of my life. I learned very quickly how intense it is to be up there, in front of a class, with all eyes glued on me waiting for me to do or say something interesting and informative.*

culture in Asia, makes teaching there an often awe-inspiring experience. As a Westerner taught in North America, my experience of the student-teacher relationship is very different from that which prevails in Thailand. There, teachers are unquestioned authority figures, to whom students bow respectfully when they pass by. Teachers, it seems, often order students to do chores and errands for them during the school day. Students oblige with heads bent in obedience. I cannot imagine this same kind of deference existing in my high school. Students would not take kindly to doing teachers’ personal errands. Yet at the same time, despite this strong sense of hierarchy, the atmosphere in the classroom was often surprisingly permissive. Students tended to be loud and cheeky, in a way that would never be tolerated by my teachers in my high school. Because I was their teacher, students served me food and fetched drinks for me, but when it came time to ask questions at the end of class, it was common and somehow deemed acceptable by Ram for students to ask me about my sexual relationships and what “attributes” I liked in a woman. I was shocked. It was an incredibly bizarre combination of respect for me as a teacher, and completely surprising (and to me, wildly inappropriate) intimacy.

I spent my time in Thailand teaching in different situations, each with unique challenges and rewards. It is strange to be teaching, after being taught myself for practically the whole of my life. I learned very quickly how intense it is to be up there, in front of a class, with all eyes glued on me waiting for me to do or say something interesting and informative. Being up there for the first time, I experienced how incredibly important a good teacher is to his or her students if they are to learn anything at all, and what an effort it takes to be a good teacher. As a whole, I found that the educational system in Thailand lacked what I would consider to be a basic curricular framework. It is much more relaxed than in Canada, which from what I could see made for happier, less stressed students. The Canadian system could learn something from this. After all, learning should be a positive, life-affirming, enriching experience. But a fine balance needs to be struck, because in Thailand “relaxed” easily becomes an end in itself, and can lead to completely non-aspirational students, and teachers who do not care.

Teaching has transformed me, that is for certain. I experienced myself in a whole new light, as someone who can hold his own on the other side of the desk, even despite language barriers and cultural differences. I think I actually helped some students speak better English, which is an amazing feeling. And I even got a Thai nick name of my own out of it: Yong Thao, which means “big foot.” ■

pronunciation and conversational skills. I found these areas to be the least developed among the students, ones upon which I could make the most impact given the time I had. Although teaching was usually fulfilling and enjoyable, I also experienced some very frustrating situations. On one occasion I was to teach the very youngest class at the high school. Ram usually relaxed in the back corner of the classroom while I taught, but during this class he conveniently decided to disappear. I was planning to teach them how to properly pronounce colours. A few minutes into the class I realized that these students spoke no English at all. Not a word. They just stared at me uncomprehendingly as I pointed to objects in the classroom and chanted Red!, Blue!, Green!, Black! This class wasn’t my most successful...

The Thai school system, as well as their unique





# Way Out of

class of '95

## Alanah Caron

The Wild Life on Cortes Island: Reaching out for Community

by Alanah Caron '95  
alanahcaron@yahoo.ca

photos courtesy of Alanah  
chanterelle photos by Claudia Raaen

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who grew up on a beautiful, old farm in King City and was a member of a vibrant and healthy community at the Toronto Waldorf School. As she grew, so too did the city nearby. It expanded to surround the small green oasis of the Waldorf school with a tremendous moat of pavement and bright lights.

When her time in school was completed, the young woman ventured out into the world. She sought once more an unhurried home. She traveled to many places. In some she found immense beauty and isolation, and in others she found incomplete social harmony. Then one day, the woman found a place that embraced her with both rugged wilderness and strong community.

Nestled between mainland British Columbia and Vancouver Island, in what some here call the Salish Sea, lies Cortes Island. It is a haven for beauty and wilderness, radicals and recluses—a little community bounded by water. Today, spring is rising from the earth; the maple and alder trees are budding forth, and cherry, plum, and apple trees are bursting into bloom.

This place is becoming my home. My grounding to land and individuals, to my food and my body is growing ever stronger here. Daily, I share again these experiences of nature and food with those around me as we nurture, within friendships, an appreciation for life. Here is a window into this wild life.

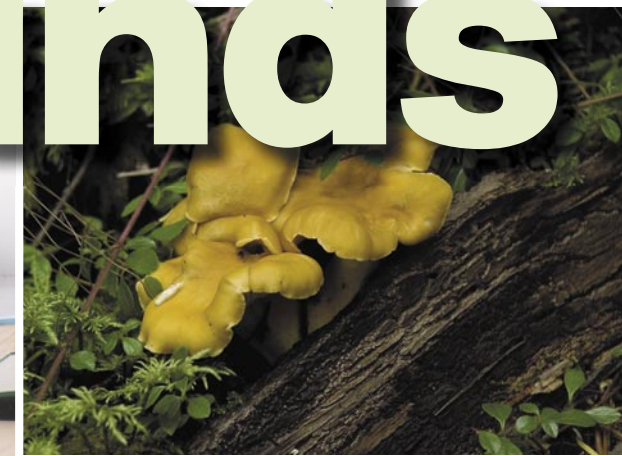
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The stinging nettles are up to my knees, and weekly my two sons, Aedrin and Nephelium, walk with me down to the Maple Tree where we gather them up. It is a Sliammon reserve named Paukeanum, which local people simply call the Maple Tree after an elegant, old, dead maple that still stands between the pebble beach and a small meadow at the edge of the ocean. The view looks out to the surrounding islands, framed in all directions by snow-capped mountains. On the other side of the meadow sits a yurt and garden. This is Alex's home, steward of the reserve.

Access is by foot or boat only. It is a twenty minute walk from the end of the road to the young alder forest at the edge of the meadow where nettles grow abundantly in the moist soil. Usually the boys and I walk with a friend or a few and harvest a medium-sized bag of nettle tips. While the adults spend an hour or so lounging around on the beach in easy, deep conversation, the boys build rafts and forts, discovering stone leopards and black sand feet. Once, at low tide, we followed the shore line north along a coast lush with mossy green maples and red-burnished arbutus trees. Often such a walk ends in a spontaneous potluck.

Nettles, one of the first early spring greens, are delicious when transformed into spanikopitas and quiches. Usually I wear rubber gloves when picking and handling them before cooking, but once blanched or sautéed their sting is gone, and they can easily be incorporated wherever one would use spinach. I combined our first nettles this spring with dried chanterelles we had foraged a few months earlier and cream to

# Bounds



create a wonderful, mostly wild and local soup.

Last fall, the autumn rains began in mid-October, and this delicate landscape that had been parched from a summer drought turned sparkling green. The forest floor became carpeted in secret places with abundant mushrooms. On a hike with a group of new friends one wet afternoon, James and I left the path and followed a little stream in search of two others who we were to meet. Suddenly, large, beautiful, yellowy-orange chanterelles seemed to burst magically through the green moss beneath our feet as we walked under the cover of the tall cedars and Douglas firs. Instantly, my passion for chanterelle foraging was born.

Several times a week last fall, the boys and I wandered in the woods a three-minute walk from our home in search of edible mushrooms. The excitement of a find is euphoric; the boys soon learned to identify and delicately pick the treasure. The rains became a blessing accompanied by the anticipation of new foraging, never knowing exactly where the next trail of bursting golden chanterelles would appear and how many would be hidden just beneath the dark brown soil. In the kitchen, after cleaning, I sautéed them in butter or added them to pasta sauce. Their pleasantly earthy flavour and meaty texture gave the meal a decadent flair.

With the return of warm spring evenings, we have been gathering at birthdays and potlucks and roasting freshly harvested oysters on an open fire. At low tide and in the right spots, one can simply gather oysters off the beach. It is as easy as putting them in a bucket, bringing them back to the fire and placing them on a grate above the flames. Within about

fifteen minutes, with a flip part way through (by Aedrin), the oysters are cooked and begin to pop open. Pry the top shell off, add a few condiments, such as cilantro chutney mayonnaise or Thai sweet hot sauce and eat the oyster right out of its shell. Delicious!

Each day I am nourished by this land, by the food it provides and the grounding and intimacy I find in wandering in search of sustenance and in sharing these local, wild delicacies with family and friends. The beauty of this rugged landscape continually stops me in my steps, and I stand still, breathing deeply and drinking in all that surrounds me. This earth is our source for life, and I see each of us as an intricate part of the earth, continually re-creating our bodies from it, physically through our food, fresh air and clean water, and also spiritually through time spent surrounded by the beauty and vibrancy of wilderness, and through moments of closeness and sharing with others.

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The young woman is still growing up. She has found a new place that is abundant with luxuriant nature and open, convivial arms. She has found a space that is still green and still unhurried, far from the noise and the haste of the city, and yet has a sparkle and a lushness within community that has become rare. When she looks around her, she sees all the riches that she could ever desire. She is at peace. ■





## E-mail from Ramallah: Reaching for the Personal in the Political

timdannenbergaol.de  
photos courtesy of Tim

It is ten in the morning, i just got back to ramallah. Usama, an art student at the academy in ramallah, invited me to his village, kofr nama, where i spent the night. Kofr nama lies on a hilltop roughly thirty minutes north west of here. Usama was born in kuwait, to palestinian parents. He is the oldest of seven. At the outbreak of the first gulf war, his parents returned to palestine. Now he works part time in the special forces (the boys in green) and studies art in between. He started "doing art" as a caricaturist in an israeli prison a few years ago. The landscape around kofr nama is probably the most beautiful i have seen since i have been here. Little mountains, covered in rugged rock and ancient looking olive trees. He lives with his family. Their house seems to be in several phases of construction; usama has his own



received his first born son. It was a surreal drive, blasting (really, really blasting) along pitch black one-lane gravel roads in the dark countryside. To the west, there was a sea of light, orange and yellow. Israel. The lights stop brutally on an invisible line. There is no fade out whatsoever. To the west of us, there was orange and yellow glowing from the occasional hilltop settlement, or in chains, on the four lane settler-only roads. We were treated to ridiculous amounts of sugar when we arrived at the young father's house. Thick mango juice, nuts, a variety of chocolates, and balls of fried sugar. Like timbits without flour. It seems to be custom that when people arrive, the host enters with a bottle of cold water and one glass. The glass is filled and offered to each guest in turn, who downs the glass in one go and gives it back to the host who refills the glass for the next visitor. This was very beautiful. I heard the clatter of family life beyond the wooden door that enclosed us in the tacky living room (with one massive fourescent element pressing down on us). But, other than the new born who the father showed for about thirty seconds, we never saw anyone. We just heard them occasionally. The young men i was with talked about their customs and beliefs, which they claim to be based on tradition and not the koran. Having four wives is ok if you have the money to pay the dowries to their families and can swing the elaborate wedding costs. If you divorce a wife or one dies, you can get (buy) another. It is ok for women to divorce their men, but only in egypt and tunisia, and only after they reimburse the husband for the wedding expenses. On the way back, we took the settler-only roads. Apparently dangerous, but time-saving. We rocked the snot out of those two poor crappy little cars, ripping past settlers (who must have been quite afraid). At one point a settler almost crashed when we passed him, and the boys got very worried that the army would be called. Chattering jesh jesh jesh (army), they managed to get even more speed out of the crappy little cars. Back in kofr nama, we visited two young men in their family homes who had just been released from prison, both having served long sentences. Both houses were full (of men and boys) drinking coffee, smoking, eating more chocolates. At home, we each ate two cucumbers to avoid the next morning's heartburn, watched al jazeera for a while and sunk into the mattresses on the living room floor.■

Tim studied art at the Bezalel Academy for Art and Design in Jerusalem for six months from February to July of 2009, on exchange from the Kunstakademie, Münster, Germany, where he is completing his fourth year of study. He lived in Ramallah.

class of '02

## Tim Dannenberg

"flat", separate from the main family, and on the floor above him another flat is being built for a brother of his. When we arrived, we first sat in his living room and ate chocolates. Tacky, tacky couches, pictures of arafat, the dome on the rock and usama in fatigues and kalashnikov on the walls. There was also a picture of him in street clothes, armed to the teeth. Digitally cut and pasted, so it looks as though he is standing in front of the dome of the rock. I suspect that this picture would be used to make posters should he be martyred. We walked around his house, which stands at the edge of a cliff, and gathered wild mint, sage and thyme. We had tea(which magically appeared on a tray, mom must have made it and silently placed it on the balcony table), trying in turn each of the herbs we had picked. I was treated like a king all night. Fed sweets and nuts, given flip flops, offered showers

and warm jackets as the sun set. I wanted to go into the village to buy smokes. I was not allowed. Usama shouted a few words in arabic into the seemingly still and empty house behind us. Less than five minutes later a little boy, his youngest brother, materialized with cigarettes. Of course he would not accept a sheqel. Many of his friends came to sit with us and watch the light fade on the limestone. We talked about things they seem to have an appreciation for: saddam hussein, hitler, german cars. I was asked my opinion on these subjects, which i gave (not so appreciative!), but unfortunately the conversation never went too deep. After the light had left us, we hopped into two cars, crappy little cars whose doors hardly close, have about two and a half gears each, and overheat once you hit fourth. We tore through the dark night, north, to visit a friend who had just

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# Faculty Feature

## Agathe Polach 15 years at the school!

### Reaching Out Toward Each Other's Culture

by Agathe Polach  
apolach@torontowaldorfschool.com

current photos by Katja Rudolph '84, September 2009  
other photos courtesy of Agathe

The year is 1994. We have just moved into Hesperus and I have been hired as a full-time French teacher at TWS. It is with great trepidation that I tread lightly, bicycle by my side, across the playing field of my new school, intent on reaching the “black top” so I can start riding and do some much needed errands. Suddenly I see a tall figure walking briskly towards me. He is shouting: “Hey you! What are you doing?” It turns out that there is no treading lightly with anything on wheels on this much beloved property! It also turns out that this voice belongs to Ray Haller, a former class teacher and current custodian of the gorgeous grounds of this school. Wow! They certainly do care for this property! Better not mess around! But once I introduce myself this strict man gives me the warmest handshake and welcomes me with: “Bonjour Madame Polach, et bienvenu à notre école.” All right, strict but very human. I can live with that. How did I get here?

I was born in Québec in the beautiful region of the Eastern Townships. I believe that what truly shaped my path more than anything was my huge extended family circle mixed with a very strong Québec nationalism that was prevalent throughout the impressionable years of my adolescence. My early years are filled with my parents, my sister, my aunts, my uncles, and my eighty-eight first cousins! A truly typical French Canadian (Catholic!) family of that era. Our free time was one big round of visiting one another. My high school and CEGEP years were exciting emotionally and politically with Pierre-Elliott Trudeau and René Lévesque battling out the fate of my beloved province. This was a great time to be a student and to truly connect with one's own language and culture. Our artistic and political

education was nurtured by the poetry and songs of Félix Leclerc and Gilles Vigneault. On the family front and in the years leading to the first referendum, the word “separatist” was by no means a dirty one amongst my clan. I remember huge bonfires held at my uncle Henri's place on Saint-Jean Baptiste Day—not the festival kind of celebration I have come to know since then—permeated with a Québécois music that spoke of preserving the French heritage and inheriting a country of our own. In fact, when Uncle Henri died, no flowers were to be sent but donations could be made to the Parti Québécois. I came of voting age with the advent of the first referendum. What an exciting time!

Although the importance of preserving my culture and language became clear to me in those years, I also started to ponder other questions. René Lévesque was adamant that the only way to achieve Québec's cultural goals was through severing the ties with the rest of the country while Pierre-Elliott Trudeau talked about a kind of federalism which would embrace Québec's values. I thought that Bill 101 was a very beautiful gesture in that direction. Besides, something deep inside me admired Trudeau's perfect mastery of both languages. The big question was: is the exclusion of the rest of the country the only possible means to achieve Québec's cultural and political goals? Will establishing more boundaries solve the dilemma?

As I pondered these questions and as I grew uneasy with the antagonism I often observed toward the rest of the country, my hometown started shrinking! Suddenly, it was not big enough to be exciting and not small enough to be quaint. So, I found myself, at the age of seventeen, on a Greyhound dream destined for Vancouver. Reaching Alberta sealed the deal; I had no idea mountains could be so big and beautiful! I was filled with curiosity to experience the anglophone version of my country.

The Greyhound dream turned out to be fulfilling enough for me to hang around for ten years. Instead of being met with antagonism, I kept meeting folks who were genuinely open and interested in Québec,

and who wanted to learn French. The next decade was filled with diverse jobs, hundreds of hikes in the mountainous paradise, meeting Ivo, who became my husband, the birth of our son Luca, and the start of my undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia with a focus on French and English literature, as well as a minor in translation.

When I met Ivo in 1986, he had just defected from Czechoslovakia. His communist-ruled country had been too confining for him. Although being an only child, he had the good fortune to have an extremely supportive mother who helped him flee the country even though she did not know when she would see him again. Through his story, my world expanded yet again, and I found myself very much interested in Eastern Europe. So, I studied the Czech language in order to connect with my ever-extending family and world. Soon thereafter, the year was 1989 (twenty years ago last November!), we were riveted to the television set in our UBC student housing. Incredible: the Berlin wall had fallen, Poland was freed....and, eventually, through days that felt more like years, Czecholavakia's day of freedom arrived via the Velvet Revolution and the haunting sound of thousands upon thousands of jiggling keys in Prague's central square.

I loved all of it; I have always loved it when stifling boundaries start to crumble and fall apart, especially through pacific means. It also meant that Luca and I would soon be able to meet the Slavic side of our family.

Life went on. We finally made it to what would soon become the Czech Republic and, although there existed a strong and vibrant underground artistic movement, there also was a pervading bleakness that was the result of the old communist regime that had attempted to stifle the ingenuity and the voice of a people by confining them for decades. What I remember from my first visit is the starkness of the unpainted buildings, the lack of colour everywhere, the little plastic Trabant cars, the feeling of

cont'd page 54





Anna in Grade 3, 1981

**Anna Purcell '91** works with books, writes online and on paper, makes stuff and enjoys linking diverse people and things together in meaningful ways. She lives on the edge of Kootenay Lake in the mountains near Nelson, BC. Here she takes daily walks along the shore, tiptoeing around fresh bear poo and eating apples and pears off other people's old forgotten unkempt trees while looking for arrowheads. She attains her needed saltwater fix through regular jaunts to both Canadian coasts, and farther afield when the opportunity arises. She is pathologically curious and revels in beauty through nature and the arts. In other news, she has also recently learned to drive. Words can't express how exciting she finds this. Sometimes in the car her face will start to hurt, and she'll realise it's because she's been smiling. Probably for a long time.



Christine in Kindergarten, 1952

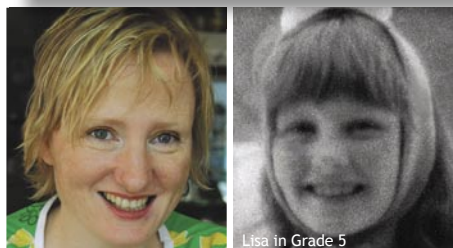
**Christine Tansley's** excellent education in England was heavily skewed towards the academic, so she is grateful that her children led her to Waldorf education with its balance of head, heart, and hands. She was involved in starting the London (Ont.) Waldorf School, became its secretary, and was a board member of the Waldorf School Association of Ontario (WSAO). The family moved close to TWS so that the children could go to a Waldorf high school, and Christine became the receptionist, a job that has changed a lot since 1991. Penn Davies ('92), Emily Davies ('95), Ting von Bezold ('98) and Bethany von Bezold ('05) have grown up to lead widely different lives. Christine makes time for bookbinding, camping and testing the limits of her inflatable kayak.



Eric in Grade 10, 1987

**Eric Rominger '89** attended the Toronto Waldorf School from Grade 6 to graduation at the end of Grade 12. He then completed the aviation program at Mount Royal College in Calgary, gaining the initial licensing requirements for becoming a commercial pilot. Starting off with bush flying, he had numerous adventures living on native reserves in Manitoba. The late 90s marked a dramatic change by moving to Halifax and beginning a new job with a regional airline. Since 2001, he has worked for Air Canada flying jetliners throughout North America. Eric currently lives north of Toronto in the country with his wife and two children, ages nine and five.

The TWS Alumni/ae Association includes all former students who attended TWS for at least one year. Register yourself, or update your contact info, by contacting TWS's Development Officer **Catherine Daugherty** at [cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.ca](mailto:cdaugherty@torontowaldorfschool.ca) 905.881.1611. This will ensure you receive *outofbounds* annually.



Lisa in Grade 5

**Lisa Wood '82** is part of the academic community of Wilfred Laurier University-Laurier Brantford in southern Ontario. Her familial community includes Stepan and Evan Wood (brothers who also attended TWS), and Jonathan Tristram Borenstein (son). She considers herself part of the following communities: the Brant Historical Society (where she is a Board member), the riding community (through her horse, Grace, from whom she has never fallen), the literacy community (through the Family Literacy Committee of Brant), and the Mousehunt community on Facebook. And of course the Toronto Waldorf School community, where she learned to think about all the angles.

## AGATHE POLACH con't from page 53

stepping back a few decades. But it was also so joyous to meet my relatives, to witness the relief of my mother-in-law and her own mother to be able to see son and grandson and great-grandson as they pleased.

Then Ivo's graduate studies took us to Wolfville, Nova Scotia, where fate intervened strongly in our lives. The Waldorf world kept coming at us from all angles! A friend had a daycare in Wolfville that was influenced by the Waldorf approach; another good friend had a brother who was a Waldorf teacher in Germany; and a third friend had a partner teaching at a you-know-what-kind-of-a-school in Toronto and his children attended the said school. Apart from all this Waldorf mystery weaving around us, I continued my studies while discovering a hint of a vocation in a newfound passion. I had started teaching non-credit French as a Second Language (FSL) courses at Acadia University. I loved sharing my language and culture with these oh-so-willing adults! Again, I loved the feeling of boundaries, walls, crumbling through this reaching out toward each other's cultures.

A fortuitous meeting in Toronto with Tanya Kutschera and her children (Jim Reed's partner—that third Wolfville friend) convinced Ivo and me that this was the education we had been looking for all these years for Luca. I had been going to home schooling meetings since my gestation days convinced that there was no education around that could match my embryonic vision of what a wholesome education could be. On the other hand, I was not at all convinced that I really wanted to be home schooling and I also felt that our only child needed a broader social environment. There was no doubt we had just found it!

Circumstances cooperated with this revelation as we were moving to Toronto anyway so Ivo could undertake his doctoral studies at the University of Toronto. Luca was of kindergarten age and the AHWS was looking for a part-time French teacher and I was hired! Then I became truly scared; would children be as receptive as the adults I had been teaching? Would I be able to manage my load of courses at U of T to finally complete my degree and teach at the same time? Although, at that point, I had read a lot about Waldorf education, would I be able to translate these wonderful theories into my actual in-classroom teaching? Would I be able to transcend boundaries and share my love of the French language and culture with my future students? Most importantly and to the point: could I hold discipline in a classroom?

Well, that first year was a true trial by fire, but there was

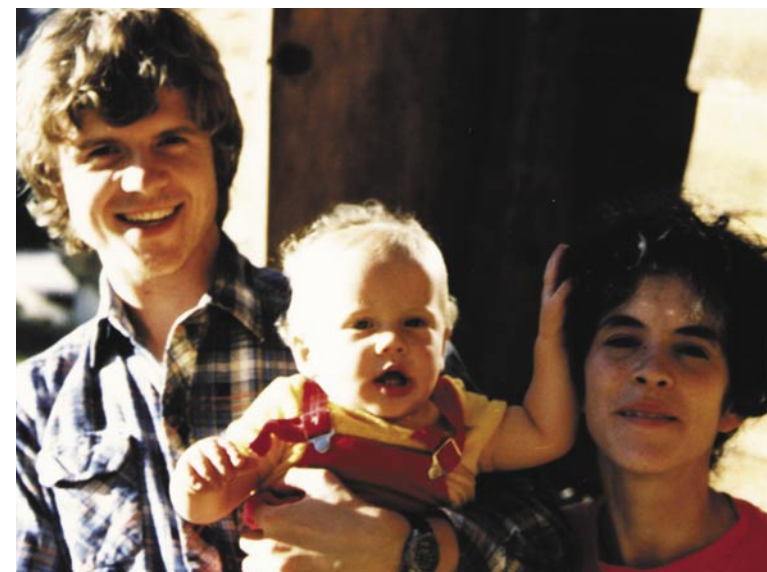
a definite as yet unrefined potential I felt growing in me. A year later, as I had completed my degree, Luca was ready for grade one and we were longing for a less urban setting for his boyhood years. TWS was looking for a full-time French teacher and...I was hired! The trial by fire continued. My mentors are too numerous to mention but I must thank Elisabeth Koekebakker and Antje Ghaznavi for believing in me and literally pushing me back into the classroom from time to time!

Slowly, through the freedom granted to and the trust invested in Waldorf teachers, I developed an enormous sense of responsibility that I know is shared by all my colleagues and that makes this work so incredibly fulfilling and challenging. Through further studies in anthroposophy, I have come to understand that each child in front of me comes from the past and, while I educate in the present, will have an impact on our world in the future when they emerge from the the classroom. Through pedagogical work and my involvement with La Semaine Française and the inspiration provided by Alain Denjean—a long-time French teacher who can enthrall his grade eight class of forty students in Stuttgart with the study of verb tenses! (I have seen this with my very own eyes!)—I am still loving my subject and am always aiming for better lessons. I have shared many joyful lessons with my students over the years but I am still aiming to make it so much fun to learn verb conjugations that the middle school students will ask for more! I can feel you all rolling your eyes... I am a dreamer who loves grammar. Beware!

The past fifteen years has been a joyful journey. As a family, we have travelled extensively, with longer stays in Central America through Ivo's work, and lately in Peru. This has further remarkably expanded our world and given us the concrete experience of how the mere gesture of



Agathe as a child (left); getting married to Ivo; and baby Luca '06 arrives!



reaching out and learning about the other's language and culture is the magic formula that dissolves boundaries. As well, and again through Ivo's work in botany, I have become acquainted with the work of Wade Davis, an anthropologist, ethnobotanist, and fabulous lecturer whom I had the pleasure to hear for the first time at U of T a few years ago. He talks about how we worry about the biosphere and then, having coined the expression *ethnosphere*, meaning the web of cultural diversity in the world, he tells his audiences how this *ethnosphere* is being eroded at a far greater rate than the biosphere. I have learned through his work that there were around 6,000 languages spoken in the world when I was born and that fully half of them are no longer taught in schools, therefore are

lost or about to be lost. At present, there exists on our planet a massive destruction of cultural diversity. This *ethnosphere* is one of humanity's greatest legacies, one which contributes enormously to our collective well-being. Another well-travelled person whom I admire, Bob Geldof, has spoken about the disappearing languages of Africa as "the lights of the human spirit winking out." These thoughts deeply touch me and I hope will inform my teaching and inspire students to open up to other cultures.

I have now reached and gone beyond my word quota, but since this is an out of bounds magazine (the title has inspired me since its inception), I hope I will be allowed some parting words. I also hope that one can be clichéd and still mean what one says: teaching keeps me on my toes and my students have been my best teachers! May we all travel on and breach our various cultural boundaries so we can meet each other with an open heart. And, thank you, Mr. Haller, for welcoming me so kindly and strictly into the heart of the Toronto Waldorf School! ■



# Faculty Feature

## Waldorf Education: The Strength of Connection between Human Beings

by Kate Anthony  
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current photos by Katja Rudolph '84, Sep 2009  
other photos courtesy of Kate

Three years ago, while teaching physics to the TWS grade six class one humid day in June, we were experimenting with balloons in an effort to generate static electricity. After disappointing results, one student wrote as a conclusion: “Don’t expect everything to turn out the way you thought it would.”

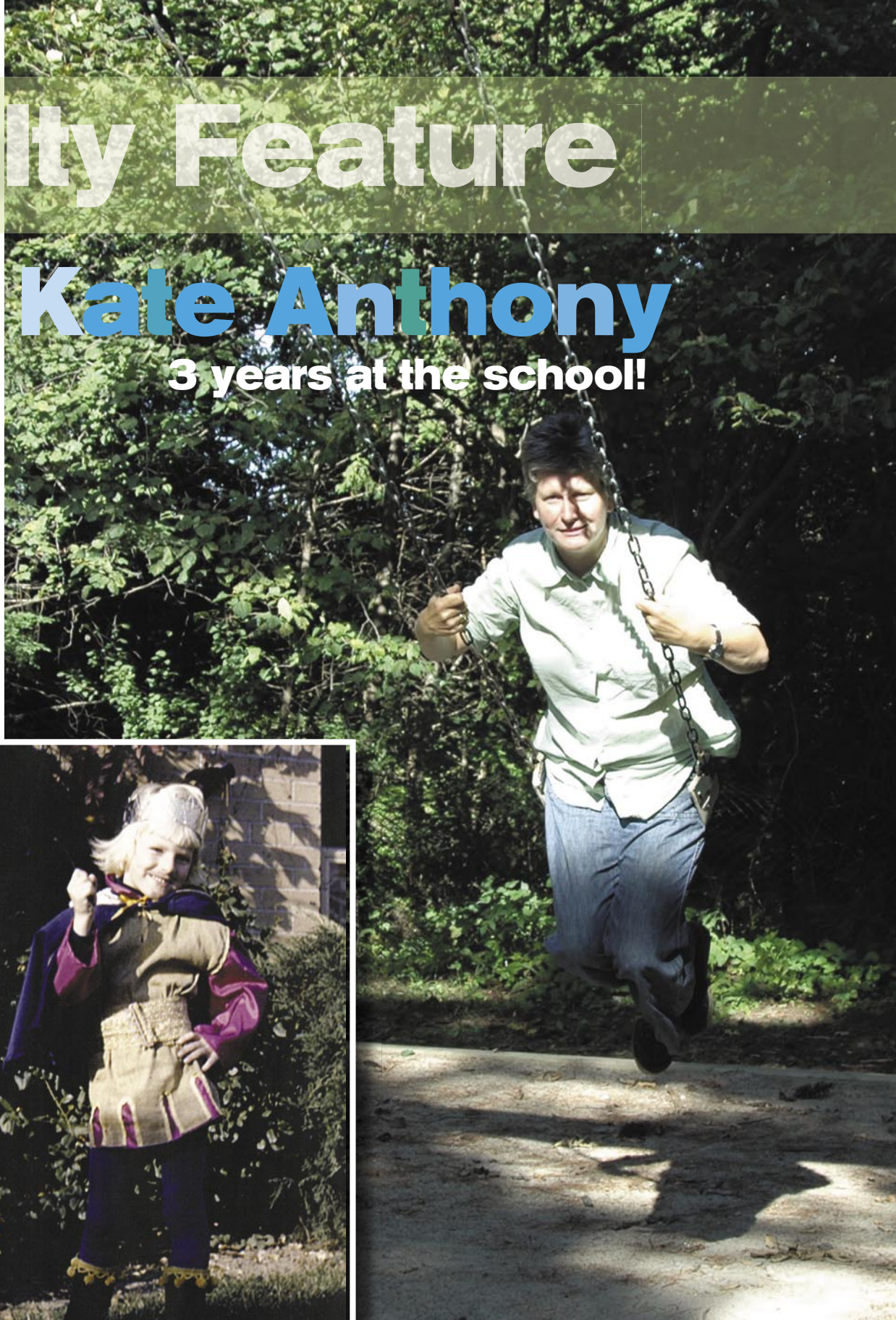
I never planned to be a teacher. As far back as I can remember I wanted to be an artist. To fully understand how I arrived at being a teacher I have to go back to the very beginning and there pick up the path that led me to Waldorf education.

All I know about my biological mother is that at the time of my birth, June 13th, 1961, she was very young. Three months later I was adopted into a loving family complete with mother, father, and brother John, who was five years old and the biological son of my parents. We lived in Don Mills: “North America’s first pre-planned community.” I had an idyllic childhood, racing around

Kate is Prince Charming, mid-60s!

## Kate Anthony

### 3 years at the school!



on my bike, playing with neighbourhood children after school until the street lights came on. My summers were spent on the east coast at my uncle Jack’s cottage with a slew of cousins, clam digging, building bonfires, and fighting imaginary pirates.

When I was eight my parents bought a hobby farm in Haliburton County and my summers were divided between the farm and summer camp. At the farm, I entertained myself for hours in the forest by watching chipmunks, cutting down trees to build forts, imagining I was sailing on the high seas, the wind blowing the leaves of my sails. My mother, an avid vegetable gardener, grew, harvested, and preserved our own vegetables. One year she used these homegrown vegetables for all our winter meals “*just like the pioneers.*” I gained a real life appreciation and understanding of what it took to get the food on the table. In addition to this settler experience, my parents took us far afield to explore the world. We visited England, Greece, and South Africa. These life experiences developed in me an awareness of the world in the dimensions of space and time as well as a broader picture of other civilizations past and present. Walking the ruins of the Acropolis and seeing animals in their natural environment were memorable experiences. My parents taught more by example and experience than anything else. In hindsight, I see that I had a very “Waldorfian childhood,” one that was rich in imaginative, physical play, with a strong connection to nature, the world, and my fellow human beings.

My experience at public school was difficult. As a student I was so shy that I was sent to a speech teacher to see if I could speak. “Quiet but pleasant, and tries hard” peppered my lower school report cards.

Being a late reader and what Rudolf Steiner refers to as a “creative speller” compounded my struggles at school. I was in the lowest group in every subject and keenly aware of the social pecking order that accompanied this. It was a difficult time. If not for the loving support of my family and a few teachers who really saw me and recognized my gifts, I might have been lost between the public school cracks. The light at the end of the school year was a month at camp. I was a completely different child at camp. I was good at all the outdoor activities and my confidence grew



along with my connection to the natural world and my peers.

By the time I reached high school, the penny had dropped and not only could I read but I was hungry for it. A girl I had grown up with asked me, “When did you get smart?” I told her, “I always was, you just didn’t know it.” This late bloomer graduated with honours.

After four years at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD), I embarked on a twenty-two year career in advertising, creating campaigns for national and international clients, including Swiss Chalet, Harvey’s, Hershey Canada, Honda, The Stratford Festival, Proctor & Gamble Environmental Division, Burger King, Mars Bars, Twix, Ivory, British Airways, Xerox, Tim Horton’s, and Holiday Inn.

My first introduction to Waldorf education occurred when my then partner’s daughter was floundering in the public school system. My partner’s brother had had similar learning challenges in South Africa and attended the Waldorf school there from grade one to grade twelve. That September, Emma joined the grade three class at the Alan Howard Waldorf School. The change in her was profound and immediate. Emma transformed into a confident little girl interested in the world and its workings. Although she continued to have learning challenges, how she felt about herself and her worth changed dramatically. She became able to recognize her own gifts and those of her classmates with a non-judgmental eye and became more at ease in school. Long before I knew anything about anthroposophy or Waldorf education, I fell in love with its miraculous impact on one child’s life. One evening her mother said to me, “You should be a Waldorf teacher—you’d be great at it.” The seed was planted.

Years later, when I was liberated from my glamorous advertising agency job by the “new guy,” my first thought was, “it’s only a job,” followed immediately by, “now what?” Advertising had been very good to me but I was ready for a change. On my short list of new careers, between cabinet maker and hockey player, was Waldorf teacher. A knee injury narrowed the list further. When I had trouble

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KATE ANTHONY con't from page 57

navigating the TWS website, I decided to drive up and talk to someone in person. I knew very little about anthroposophy or Waldorf teaching methods but when I turned off Bathurst Street towards the school the sun was shining, the geese were flying, and there was the promise of spring in the air, and I had this overwhelming feeling that I was meant to be there. The more I found out about Waldorf education, the stronger that feeling became. I recognized that my own life out east, at the hobby-farm, at camp, and at elementary school helped prepare me for teaching. Travels with my family ignited in me a world consciousness found in the Waldorf curriculum.

It took me nearly forty years to get from Rippleton Road Public School to the Toronto Waldorf School. My life experience has prepared me to be the teacher my students need me to be. I know in my heart the impact academic struggles can have on children and recognize in myself a sincere desire to make their journey a little easier as they reach for their potential. When I think about the Waldorf curriculum and its approach to educating the whole child by delivering the right subject at the right time, I see such great wisdom in what Steiner brought to education. In light of this wisdom and these methods, I have transformed my experiences into the tools with which I teach. And I am daily struck by the generous spirit of my more experienced colleagues who have supported and guided me through my first years as a teacher.

But what does it look like in the classroom? The beauty, elegance, and common sense of the curriculum and pedagogy are all well and good in the confines of a school on an idyllic piece of land, but is it practical in the “real world”? How is it relevant to today’s child? These are questions that live in me. If the world is getting smaller through the ease and speed of travel and communication, why are we so disconnected from the strife and challenges of our fellow human beings? I believe, and indeed Steiner suggests, that the foundation for a just, equitable, and peaceful world lies in the strength of the connection between human beings, in our reaching out to each other, as well as in the connection between ourselves as individuals and the natural and unseen worlds. It is this interconnection on many levels that Waldorf education seeks to nourish: that we see each other and all aspects of our beautiful and sometimes troubled world with loving eyes first. I can think of nothing more relevant to today’s children and to the “real world.”

I remember asking my mother, “What should I be when I grow up?”

“Whatever you want to be,” she replied.

“No, what do *you* want me to be when I grow up?”

“Happy.”

And indeed I am. I didn’t know then that happy would be looking out at a sea of shining, expectant faces and meeting with the adventure of teaching grade two at a Waldorf school.

So much more than a job.

While I attended the Rudolf Steiner Centre’s teacher training program, and during the summers, I work my own custom built-in furniture business, She Bangs. I have also been known to work as a handywoman, but my true love is designing built-ins using traditional furniture techniques. My woodworking hero is James Krenov. I currently live with the fabulous Pam and our two dogs in Riverdale, Toronto. ■

# Former Faculty Remember



**Charlotte Chambers**  
TWS Class Teacher 1975-1979

Class of 1987 with class teacher Charlotte Chambers - Grade 1, 1975

## Working with Others to Foster the Well- Being of Earth and Humanity

*by Charlotte Chambers  
charlotte.chambers@goldenelmfarm.com  
photos courtesy of Charlotte*

While I was growing up on our family dairy farm in Wisconsin, occasions would arise when my mother would share anecdotes and experiences from her four years as a high school student in the original Stuttgart

Waldorf School. These memories were always full of enthusiasm and love for the unique individuals who together with Rudolf Steiner created a new form of education. When at the age of fourteen the possibility arose that I too could go to Europe and experience this kind of schooling, it didn’t take me long to pack my bags. As I did not speak German, I spent the first year with the grade eight class and lived in the household of the Von Radecki family. Mr. Von Radecki was the grade one class teacher. In the beginning I understood very little and could only observe but Eurythmy was one subject I could learn without knowing the language, and our teacher, in her last year before retirement, was delighted to have such an enthusiastic young student. As I was rather shy, it took some time for me to connect socially. The class hiking

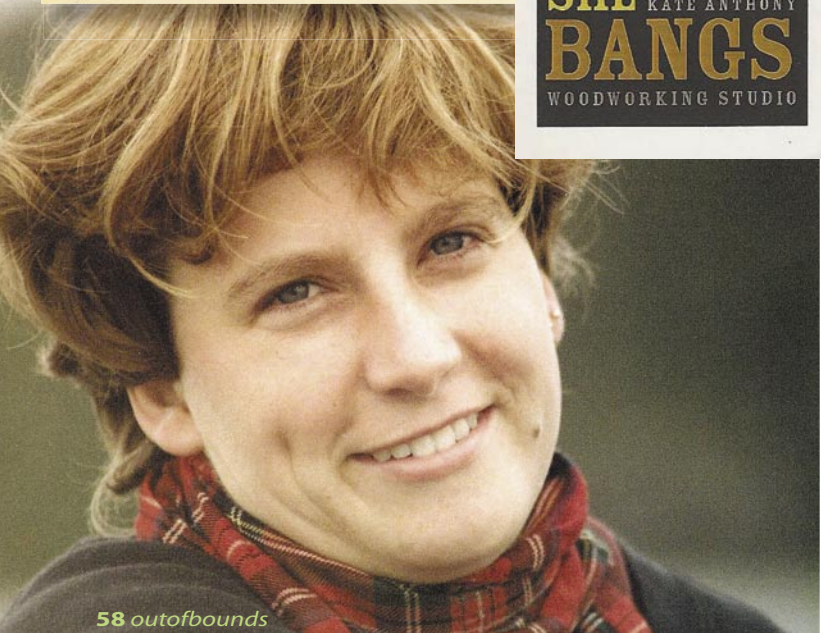
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outofbounds 59



Kate in New Brunswick, 1966; Kate with dog in the early 70s; Kate’s furniture business poster; Kate at 25, 1986



58 outofbounds





CHARLOTTE CHAMBERS con't from page 59

trips we made to the Alps were wonderful opportunities for learning to work together through outer challenges—blistered feet, sore shoulders from the weight of backpacks, joint injuries, hunger pangs. Here a robust farm girl could show her strength and win respect in a way not possible in the classroom. Math was one of my favorite subjects so it was helpful for me when in high school our class advisor was also our math/physics/geometry teacher.

Our teachers had such a vibrant enthusiasm and command of their subject matter that learning and retaining knowledge was easier and more enjoyable than I had previously experienced. I loved

working on my lesson books in the evenings. This way of teaching was more creative than the competitively ambitious “get the highest mark” approach I had experienced in the public school system in Wisconsin. I was free to work out of my own creativity, enthusiasm, and initiative rather than being manipulated by outer goals: a mark, some privilege, a certificate.

For my final grade twelve year I returned to the US and attended the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan. The highlights of that year were preparing and performing Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* under the direction of Christy Barnes, and her teaching us creative writing through a course in Russian literature. Her warm understanding of and love for these great writers enabled us to live into the soul of their work and quality of language. I am very grateful to have had her as a teacher. The play was demanding in a different way. It challenged us through social interaction and creativity. It was a magnificent finale to five wonderful years in my life.

After studying art for three years at the University of Wisconsin, I helped my parents to move the family dairy operation to a farm in Ontario. In September 1969 I returned to New York City to study Waldorf education with Henry Barnes and Ekkehard Pienning, and Eurythmy with Ilse Baravalle Kimball. Returning to Canada two years later, I spent time absorbing what I had experienced and helped my parents in farming, caring for the garden and fields, milking cows, putting up hay, cleaning the barn, preparing meals, and baking bread. During the summer months we had a camp for children and young people who wanted to learn by helping. Through the Childrens’ Aid we cared for children in need of a home. I enjoyed reading and being creative with them.

Then the day came when I felt ready to become a class teacher. And TWS needed a teacher for the new grade one class in September of 1975. There was still work to do on the magnificent new building but I felt privileged to teach in such a special space with an inspiring group of devoted individuals. I

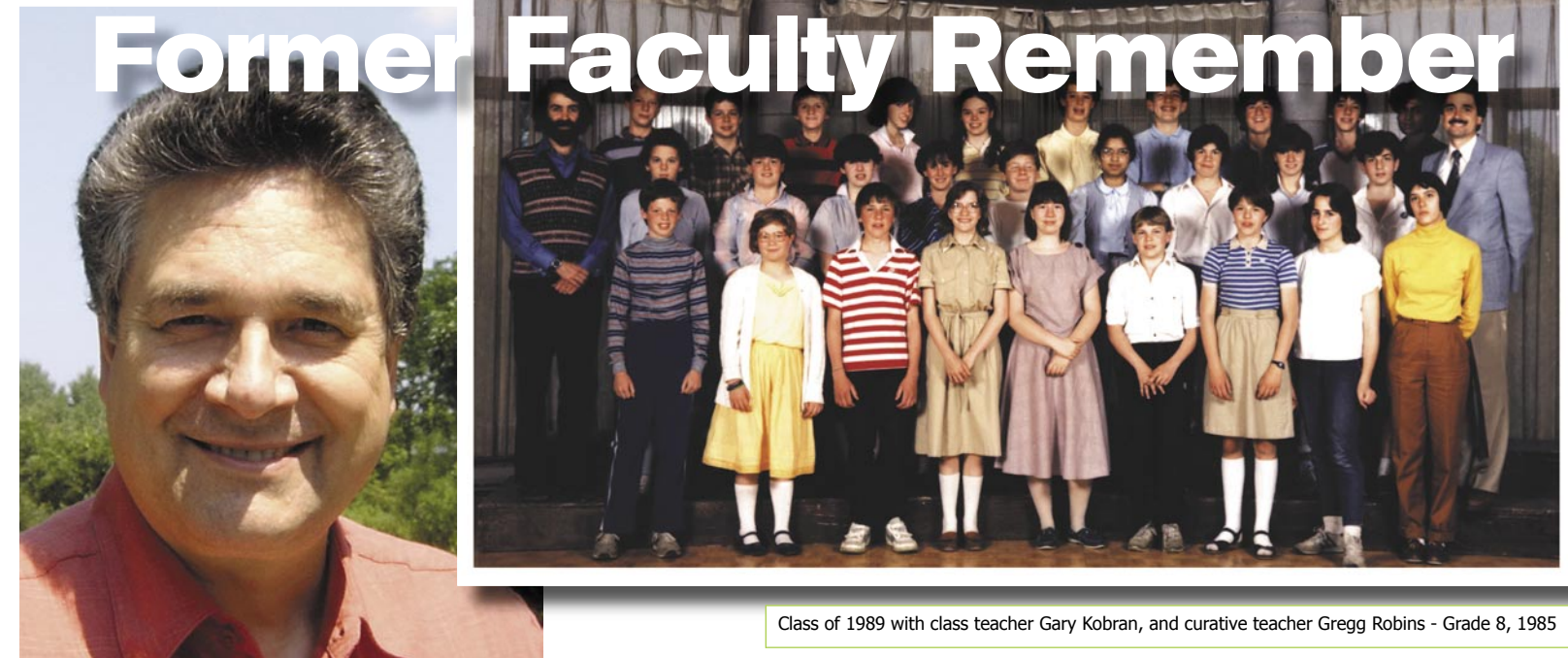
experienced a great deal of warm, supportive energy, and a spirit of cooperative working together. As a member of the faculty I was also invited to participate in the decision-making processes which determined the development of the school as a whole.

The children of the grade one class I taught, the Class of '87, were very capable and creative. There was an equal number of boys and girls and the majority of them had been in the kindergarten with Mieke Cryns. She had taught them how to work and play creatively together and they were very good at colouring and painting and working with their hands. It was great fun teaching these children about the qualities of the letters and numbers and how to put them together into their first words through combining sounds. By bringing the curriculum content into pictures and writing, and by developing relationships through this process, we created a foundation upon which to build the work of the next three year. The grade two classroom was very unny and full of light. This encouraged our covering the walls with beautiful pictures and watercolour paintings. My memories are of quiet intense activities: colouring, writing, making beeswax figures, knitting and crocheting, and group activities: music,

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Class of 87 in Grade 2, 1976/77. Photo by Richard Chomko



Class of 1989 with class teacher Gary Kobran, and curative teacher Gregg Robins - Grade 8, 1985

## Gary Kobran

### TWS Class Teacher 1974-1985

### Seeking the Soul in Education

by Gary Kobran  
gkobran@wheelerandtaylor.com  
photos courtesy of Gary

I was born in Brooklyn, NY, but my first memories of childhood start with my life in the Bronx where I moved with my family when I was two. I was the second of four children in a middle class Jewish family. One of the things I remember most vividly from my earliest years is a dissatisfaction with school. Every Saturday upon waking I was thrilled that I would not have to go to Public School 12 for two whole days. I did well enough at school, but it was boring and lacking an essential element for which I had no name. In retrospect I know that it was not just one element, but many. Eventually, when I met Waldorf education, I found names for what was lacking.

When I was twelve we moved to Kingston, NY, which is ninety miles north of the “City.” We lived in a rural setting and having a farm abutting our property was a joy most of the time. But school did not change much and I remember at age fifteen wondering why I had wasted all those years in classrooms that I experienced as similar to prisons. I made an oath to become a teacher some day and to do it right. Of course, at the time, I had no idea what “doing it right” might mean.

By the time I got to college I had begun to study the work of Rudolf Steiner. I was introduced to Steiner by my elder brother Joel Kobran. He was perhaps the most brilliant person I have ever met and, until his death a few years ago, he was as much my teacher for most of my life as my brother. Now I cannot say that my education at Hamilton College (a small liberal arts school in upstate NY) in the mid-60s was boring, but most of the teachers shared the prevailing materialistic view of life that still permeates almost all education today, and so I was again quite dissatisfied, but in a different way. If one mentioned the words “soul” or “spirit” one was either laughed at or pitied. A prominent anthroposophist, Owen Barfield, came to lecture at Hamilton in my senior year. I was very excited to know he was coming, but was dismayed to learn that he would never mention Rudolf Steiner in his lectures because, as he said, “it could hurt a student’s academic career to cite Steiner as he was not respected by any scholars of our time.”

I spent my junior year of college in Paris and it was there that I met Rita to whom I have been wed for almost forty years. That was undoubtedly the most precious gift I received from my college education.

After graduating, I was drafted into the US Army at the height of the war in Vietnam. I was lucky to serve stateside the entire two years and during that time Rita and I were married. From there I went on to obtain an MA in French at the University of Buffalo. After graduating, Rita and I stayed in that area. I taught high school mathematics and she taught high school French. It was while we were in the Buffalo area that my voyage in Waldorf education really began. I knew there were Waldorf schools, but I had never seen one except for a few hours in France and in England during my junior year in Europe. Rita and I started attending anthroposophical lectures in

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GARY KOBRAn con't from page 61

Toronto. We heard there was a school there and we went to a festival. We were blown away, as they say. Teaching in such a school is what we wanted to do if we could.

We both received our training at Emerson College in England, where my vague sense of what had been lacking in my own education became clear to me. We then immigrated to Canada in 1974 to take a job at the Toronto Waldorf School. During the first three years at TWS, I did about everything possible, including driving the school bus to and from the subway twice a day. I taught French, form drawing, painting, gym, wood work, assisted in handwork, and told stories to several classes. It was kind of crazy, now that I think about it, but you could not have a better general training in Waldorf education than this total immersion.

I was very nervous about taking a class with all the responsibility that came with it. I liked art, but really did not have an artistic bone in my body. I loved music, but I could not read music. I had taught painting, but I had no real facility for it. I had a bad temper at times, well, I should say many times! I was impatient, overly intellectual, opinionated, too touchy, not as smart as I imagined, and out of my depth when it came to the really subtle things. I could go on; the point is, I had many doubts that I was “perfect” for the job.

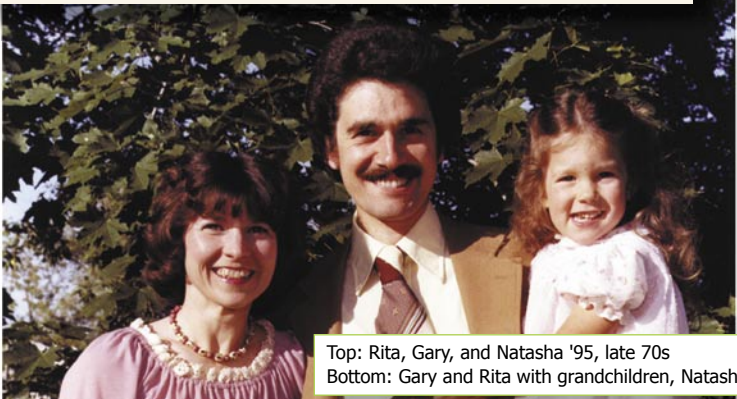
I don't want to paint too bleak a picture. After all, that would put in a bad light the colleagues who thankfully saw the positive in me. I had a few qualities that I also knew would be useful. I could tell a story fairly well. I had been a math major when I started college so I was not afraid of math or science. I loved reading history and, although I had many gaps in my knowledge, I was pretty certain I could learn that well enough. My English writing skills were fair, but I knew I would be way ahead of the children, at least to begin with. And I had an abundant love of literature, music, art and just about everything imaginable. I was committed to this wonderful educational impulse given to us by Rudolf Steiner. And, most importantly, I had lots of enthusiasm and I really loved children.

So, the faculty saw what was positive and took a chance on me somehow overcoming some, if not all, of my shortcomings. And the children came and I give most credit to them in helping me to become a Waldorf teacher. I had an incredible class! They, the Class of '89, were lively and very eager to learn and to participate in everything we did. There isn't space here to describe as fully as they deserve the extraordinary characters that made my class such a gem to teach and to be with. Suffice it to say that they were wonderful.

Credit here must go to all my colleagues who were so supportive over the years. I was always good at learning from others. So every year in the summer I grilled Elisabeth (Hoffman) Chomko who taught the class ahead of me. I also received enormous help from the many other dedicated class teachers who had taught before me. I was so lucky to have an array of very talented specialist teachers. French, handwork, woodwork, German, Eurythmy, music, art—all the special subjects were loved by my class and they did extraordinary things in all subjects. Mr. Robins, who is now a class teacher at the Alan Howard Waldorf School, was an extra spoke in our wheel for much of our voyage through the grades and he was a great asset to the class.

A few memories from my class, the Class of 1989:

- Our class presentation of the many tasks of man on the earth, ending with “What shall we do with the drunken sailor?”
- The exquisite mural we painted on the wall outside our room in grade five or six of a scene from an Egyptian tomb. Aurelie's mom, Anne Marie Heintz, helped with this and we were so pleased with the result.
- Our grade two play, “Stone Soup.”
- I will always remember fondly most of my class sledding behind the school and their joy in all such games and outdoor activities.
- The music in our class was always outstanding—not because of me, of course. I think it was in the sixth grade that they sang “The Streets of Laredo,” and I know it made me cry every time.
- They were equally grand at recitation. When they recited “The Highwayman” for an assembly with gusto and clarity everyone was moved.
- Although I am not an actor, my kids always loved the plays we did, from *Thor and his Hammer* to our final production of *The Tempest* in grade eight. Mrs. Lebret wrote original music for that production, which the students played beautifully. We had exciting Eurythmy for several scenes in the play as well, and great costumes and sets thanks to the parents and Rita. I think back on that play with such joy. It is one gift I will always cherish.
- Our graduation was splendid. We had lots of beautiful music (except when I tried to play as part of a flute trio and lost my nerve), and recitation from the work through the grades. Elizabeth Boer spoke for the class and that speech was truly astonishing.



Top: Rita, Gary, and Natasha '95, late 70s  
Bottom: Gary and Rita with grandchildren, Natasha's daughters



I must also mention the parents who were so supportive of what we were doing over the years. Such great kids had to have great parents, so it was no surprise that they were indeed unfailingly dedicated and enthusiastic. The success we had as a class had a lot to do with the strong parental support in so many areas during all eight years.

Needless to say, Rita was a constant support over my entire tenure as a Waldorf teacher. She also taught at TWS, where she was kindergarten teacher, French teacher, as well as school librarian. She has been a French teacher at the Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School for many years.

In June of 2009, Rita and I travelled to Toronto for the 20 Year Reunion of my class. I hadn't seen many of them since we graduated together from grade eight way back in 1985. What a delight indeed it was to see these mature adults, many with spouses and young children. We had a great time reminiscing, but also just chatting like adults will at a party. I have noticed, over the many years that I have watched Waldorf alumni/ae go out into the world (this includes my own dear three children), how strong they are as individuals. This I experienced abundantly at the reunion. And, thankfully, these adults do not look back at their education as boring or irrelevant. What a joy it was to see that this June.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to teach in a wonderful Waldorf school like TWS. When I decided to take a few years off it was not because I had lost any faith in what I was trying to accomplish. I had a family to support and I decided that this took precedence over taking another class. As you all know, Waldorf teachers are not well paid considering what they do. Things may have improved somewhat since I left, but it's still a struggle for a young family. I worked in the insurance business after leaving TWS, and when we moved to Massachusetts I continued doing that. I have been involved with one of the Waldorf schools in our area and was active on its board for many years. I imagined that my teaching experience gave me a special insight into what was essential and right for the school. Perhaps it did. But I miss the teaching very much and I am full of gratitude to those teachers who do make the sacrifice to keep Waldorf education alive in this world, which so dearly needs it.

I would be delighted to hear from my students and from anyone who remembers me from my years at TWS. I do get to Toronto at least once a year, as my daughter Vanessa, who is an actress, lives there and we do have many friends who we love to visit. So send me a note or an email or give me a call when you have a chance. ■

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CHARLOTTE CHAMBERS  
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eurythmy, recitation and concentration exercises, and learning the times tables through rhythmic movement and rhyme.

The third year we rehearsed and performed the play about King David. This was the year of learning about house-building and gardening, how to live and provide for ourselves and others. Noah built the ark, survived the flood and started a whole new way of life in a new place. I also included a block of Native stories and poems and we looked at different types of dwellings made from the different environments people lived in around the world. Grade four was the experience of Norse mythology, full of dynamics, conflict and resolution. How do we build relationships of fairness and come to the aid of one another to facilitate truth, beauty, and goodness? By this time some of the students in this class had been together for several years and had built very loyal friendships. The boys loved playing soccer together and often the girls would join in. They would return to the classroom after recess sweating and out of breath, having given their hearts and lungs a good workout, and were ready to focus on their work again. It was a joy to see how many of the students had developed a sense of self-confidence and self-expression.

As I was more artistic and practical than academic in my life, I had concerns about my own ability to lead this gifted group of children through the curriculum of grades five to eight. Math was not a problem, but my English language skills were rather deficient due to having spent my high school years in the German language. For the sake of the academic education of the children I therefore decided not to continue teaching after grade four. I was instead considering studying art therapy in Germany. What I had, however, experienced in these four years of working with the children and the faculty of TWS had awakened a deep-rooted conviction in me that human beings can work together and create centres where the human spirit can find expression in the truest sense of the word.

Since that time I have been many places and experienced many things in life. For eight years I worked with Blue Mountain Resorts moving from the position of front desk clerk to hotel relief manager. The experiences with this organization taught me much about working with people. In the fall of 1987, I decided to return to the family dairy farm and promote on-the-farm education. Young people from around the world have spent time here and my purpose is to promote the life and health of the earth and the human being through creative action. I feel very fortunate to be a member of a community where there are others also living out of these ideals. The recent fight to protect the “purest water in the world” through the united effort of the community of Elmvale and the Native communities is one example of people harmoniously working together to promote the health and well being of the earth and humanity. Two of the greatest gifts I have been given in my life are growing up with healthy biodynamic food and experiencing Waldorf education. It is these ideals I will continue to promote in my life and the world. For me, visiting the Toronto Waldorf School is always like coming back to the source, coming home. ■



# POINT OF VIEW



Dr. Lisa Wood, Class of '82  
lwood@wlu.ca  
Associate Professor, Laurier Brantford  
Contemporary Studies

## Real and Imagined Communities in the Facebook World

I have to confess to some anxiety in writing this article. I was asked to discuss the role of social networking programs and the internet in relation to Waldorf communities and principles, and I spent a week trying to begin (“internet” and “Waldorf” in the same sentence?!). This really shouldn’t be so difficult. I teach media and literature at Laurier Brantford, and am an active and avid user of Facebook. Yet I began three times, with three memories that seemed equally significant.

The first memory is of a recent moment. I walk into the rec room to find my son playing an MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) while on the speaker phone to a friend, as he simultaneously communicates via earphone to his team-mates on Call of Duty 4, an Xbox game. Looking up from his play, he gives a polite and coherent response to a question about dinner (yes, chicken is a great idea).

The second is nostalgic. I am standing on the outskirts of a circle of kids on the edge of the soccer field at TWS in 1975. They are avidly discussing the latest episode of *Happy Days*. The details become excellent pieces of social credit when I share them with the next group, even though my parents keep the 10” black and white

television in the closet (it only comes out for the Grey Cup and *Beachcombers*). Despite some faint guilt at masquerading as a TV watcher, I know that Richie Cunningham’s latest problem is in fact a sophisticated tool for communicating with my peers.

The third is celebratory. I am standing on my deck in August of 2008. The sun is going down, and a group of swimmers and splashers still occupies the pool. We have had a wonderful class reunion. Wendy’s dog roams happily around the yard, Nelson cradles a sleepy toddler, and I am enjoying the cool sweet taste of Hermione’s strawberry wine which goes exceptionally well with Clarisse’s juicy sense of humour. I found all of these people on Facebook, and it seems ironic that an on-line social networking program could make a Waldorf reunion possible.

These memories are significant for the clues they provide about the relationship between community and technology. They tell me, first, that technology plays an important role in communication in the modern world. It provides social capital that allows for communication within peer groups, as in the case of *Happy Days* and my son’s MMORPG, and it is a tool for enabling f2f (face-to-face) interactions like our informal reunion. Second, these moments tell me that virtual and physical community are not mutually exclusive, that they can comfortably and productively co-exist.

It would be easy to conclude that the real value of virtual communities lies in their ability to lead to “real world” engagement, making on-line communication simply a sub-category of “real” communication. If that were the case, my article would end here. But I’d be lying if I said I believed that was the whole story.

Before we come to any sort of definitive conclusion (and I warn you that, even if you read to the end of this article, you won’t find one), a couple of issues have to be addressed. The first is the distinction between virtual and “real” experience, where we distinguish between experiences that occur in physical space and those that occur in electronic space. We habitually differentiate the two, and some assume that one is necessarily better, or more “healthy,” than the other.

North American critics of media present a picture of online engagement that is profoundly ambivalent. On one hand, academics like Stephen Kline argue that new media lead our children “out of the garden,” an almost mythic space of self-guided play in a natural environment (something like the TWS playground, I imagine), and compromise the traditional learning

that took place in such spaces.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, researchers like Don Tapscott describe the creative ways children adapt and incorporate new media into the social experience of childhood, and argue that new technologies work to empower young people in a world in which their interests are often secondary.<sup>2</sup> These two approaches fall roughly into two categories that Marsha Kinder describes as “alarmists” and “optimists.” Alarmists at their most extreme fear that technology may lead children to become “a mass of dumbed-down killers and zombies,”<sup>3</sup> a view that was forefront in the recent media coverage of Brandon Crisp, a Barrie, Ontario teen who disappeared after his parents confiscated his Xbox. At the other end of the spectrum, in a recent CBC Radio interview Don Tapscott cited the case of a Rhodes Scholar who had never visited his university library—he used Google Books instead.<sup>4</sup> While we may not understand it, he says, we need to accept that youth are using these technologies to successfully learn about and negotiate the modern world. While we may not share Tapscott’s enthusiasm for the way that the “net generation” is changing our world, it’s useful to consider what, if anything, is positive about the “virtual” world of the internet.

The second issue has to do with the idea of community, and what, precisely, makes a community a positive social force. Are on-line communities any more or less “real” than their traditional counterparts? Let’s think, first, about what we mean by community. At the simplest level, a community can be defined as a group of people with shared concerns, interests, or experiences. In this sense, a family can be considered a community, as can the people associated with a school like TWS. There’s no limit to the number of participants in a community, with one exception: there can be no community of one.

Do the members of a community have to actually know one another? Easy answer: no. As a graduate of the Class of 1982 (yikes!), I don’t know the current students of TWS, and don’t even know most of the alumni/ae from any year after my own. Do I feel a sense of community with them? Yes, but not through actual contact. We share an experience (attending TWS) that may have changed somewhat over time, but has retained the same basic structure. Presumably, this experience has produced a shared set of values that binds us together in a community.

At the largest levels, we all are members of the “global community” and of our individual nations. As

one political theorist notes, a nation is an “imagined” community, “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>5</sup> These “imaginary” constructs are no less “real,” however, than the community in my neighbourhood in Brantford, Ontario, and have no smaller an impact on my lived experience.

So, what’s the relationship between on-line communities and the historic idea of nation? Both bring together people who have little “real” (i.e., face-to-face) experience of one another, and both have effects on the lived experiences of their members. Both depend upon an idea of similarity and togetherness to solidify links between members. Of course, there are significant differences between nations and on-line communities, but in these ways they are very similar, which suggests to me that we need to think seriously about the role of on-line communities in our lives.

Research has shown that internet communities have a number of beneficial effects. First, studies have demonstrated that “online communication does not displace but rather supplements or even stimulates face-to-face communication, strengthening social networks.”<sup>6</sup> Second, on-line communities fulfill significant needs for those who may be marginalized within mainstream society, such as gay and lesbian youth,<sup>7</sup> or immigrant adolescents.<sup>8</sup> Third, on-line communities have facilitated social movements that have significant effects, such as the overturning of part of the new driving legislation for youth in Ontario, and the election of Barack Obama as U.S. President.

On the other hand, many of the problems of real world communities are translated to the internet, a notable example being the on-line ostracization of unpopular teens. There have also been significant critiques of the capacity for social activism made possible by on-line communities, summed up in the term “slacktivism.”

Nevertheless, without Facebook I never would have known how my former classmates have spread across North America, from Calgary to Salt Spring Island to San Francisco. I would also never have known the small details of their lives (like their children’s names, their passions, their careers) that for me are so essential to being connected to a community. I also

would probably not have been standing on my deck last August, watching people I hadn’t seen in years,

and their children, whom I had never seen, play in my pool. I wouldn’t have commiserated about politics with alumni/ae in Alberta, or written this article, which Katja asked me about through Facebook.

As promised, I am coming to no decisive conclusion. Instead, I’m going to recommend an ongoing critical attitude toward electronic technologies, and the social utilities they make possible, that acknowledges both their potential benefits and drawbacks. For some perspective, I think back to the debates around the invention of the novel in the eighteenth century, when critics feared the moral impact of the new stories that were being disseminated to the reading public. Innovations in communication have stimulated moral panics for millennia, long before electronic media were introduced, and I think it’s useful to place the internet within this longer history. Doing so helps us to see that electronic media are not necessarily inherently good or bad, but that their effects depend primarily on how we use them: to open up and transform our world or to limit and escape from it. It seems clear to me that the actual impact of electronic technologies lies somewhere between the views of the alarmists and the optimists: not an absolutely corrupting medium, but not a panacea either. It is up to us to shape our experiences, whether live or electronic, and to remember that we can and should carry our social, moral, and spiritual values across the nebulous border between “real” and “virtual.”

As for me, I’m going to update my Facebook status to: “Finished writing—red wine on deck.” And then I’ll relax under the ginkgo tree and wait for the neighbours to arrive. ■

Realities Less Limited than Their Own: Young People Practising Same-Sex Attraction on the Internet.” *Sexualities* 10.1 (Feb. 2007): 82-100.  
<sup>8</sup> Nelly Elias and Dafna Lemish. “Spinning the Web of Identity: The Roles of the Internet in the Lives of Immigrant Adolescents.” *New Media and Society* 11.4 (June 2009): 533-551.



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## Beyond the Green Economy: What Comes After the Best Thing Ever?

My name is Tad Hargrave. I do marketing consulting for green, eco-friendly, holistic, and otherwise conscious entrepreneurs to help them get more clients and increase their cash-flow. I help them find sustainable livelihoods doing the things they love to do. And I have a confession . . . I think the Green Economy is unsustainable. I’m writing this piece because I think you might secretly, or not so secretly, suspect this too. I’m writing this to encourage us all to look further and continue the conversation that is bubbling to the surface everywhere I turn. It’s a conversation centred around the question, what’s next? I’m writing this article to challenge you to pick up a pen and get really specific about your vision for where we’re going.

cont’d page 66

*This section allows alumni/ae and community members to share their knowledge, opinions, & observations with each other. The views expressed in this section and in any alumni/ae or faculty/staff article do not necessarily reflect the views of the Toronto Waldorf School.*



*Why we all know the Green Economy isn't the Final Goal*

If everyone recycled, rode their bikes, bought organic food, and used compact fluorescent lightbulbs we'd only slow down the rate of the damage we're doing. And not as much as we might like. Maybe, like me, you are beginning to see the unintended consequences that the Green Economy produces. Perhaps you suspect that the number of wind turbines and solar panels we'd need to fuel our energy costs would still require an incredible amount of strip mining. Or, that all those lentils and all the rice we eat in our groovy vegetarian diets is often shipped from the other side of the planet. Or maybe you have realized that biofuels may not be the solution we once hoped they would be. Many people I speak with feel that what we've been doing with the Green Economy is changing the deck chairs on the Titanic. There's a point where making an environmentally violent situation less violent and not taking a stand to actually stop the violence itself becomes the problem. Many people I know share the sentiment that we can't "go back" but they also know that we can't keep going forward the way we are. The only question to ask ourselves then is: what is a better way forward?

*The Green Economy is a Bridge – Not the Shore*

These days you can't go two steps without seeing the word "green" tagged onto some product or service. Magazines have their green issues, businesses are going green, Walmart and other huge companies are seeking to reduce their environmental footprint. Every time I'm out at the organic food store I see some new eco friendly cleaner, some new organic/raw/vegan/alkalizing food bar. If you're like me then you don't think the Green Economy is "evil." It's good that the corporate world is at least paying lip service to greenness, because it means that the green discourse finally has real power. But you don't think it's the end of the game either. Not by a long shot. You see that it's a bridge, a very important one, to somewhere else. We need to move toward this "somewhere else." But to create alternative solutions we need to understand the problems so that we don't accidentally recreate them (e.g. biofuels leading to massive deforestation and food shortages). And this giving up of false hopes is the beginning of real progress. I am suggesting that the Green Economy is, in the seven-generations perspective, a false hope. I am suggesting that we bring all of our creativity, optimism, passion, and joy in life, as well as our critical thinking and honesty, to bear on the issue of our future. I believe creative solutions are possible – but how we identify the solution depends on how we define the problem. To the right you will find a chart with my sense of some of the key differences between the past Suicide Economy and the new Green Economy we've been moving into.

*YOUR CHALLENGE: Fill in the Third Column*

But there's also a third column, in which my ideas are in brackets. I want to challenge you to take ten minutes to fill this out for yourself. What do *you* think is beyond the Green Economy? Share your answers with a friend. Talk about it! ■



**THE SUICIDE ECONOMY**

**GOAL** global corporate capitalism  
**PEAK EXPRESSION** multinational corporations  
**MINDSET** the system is good and works (if you work the system)  
**WAGES** minimum wage  
**TRADE** free trade  
**RESOURCES** the world is full of objects to exploit  
**SPEED** accelerating pace  
**ECONOMY** globalized  
**TECH** high levels of technology (computers, biotech, nanotech)  
**ECONOMIC GOAL** unending growth measured by money through GDP of national economies  
**WHOSE NEEDS MATTER** white, straight, monied, able bodied men  
**LINES AND BORDERS** money/capital moving freely across borders but not people  
**FAMILY MODEL** strict father model of family  
**DEVELOPMENT** forcing developing countries to develop into free market capitalist societies  
**EDUCATION** mandatory, state-run education plus private schools (two-tiered)  
**FOOD** fast food restaurants and chain store groceries  
**MODE OF TRANSPORT** passive audience entertained by a global, highly specialized cadre of performers to whom we have no personal connection (celebrities)  
**INDUSTRY** make machines more efficient  
**JUSTICE** super prisons - how to make them more efficient and profitable - justice by punishment, exclusion, and shunning  
**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** are a problem/burden to the state to be dealt with  
**PRODUCTION** mass produced: factories in Majority World countries at exploitative wages



**THE GREEN ECONOMY**

**GOAL** local living economies  
**PEAK EXPRESSION** conscious, local business  
**MINDSET** the system is good and basically works, but does have serious problems that need to be addressed  
**WAGES** fair/living wage  
**TRADE** fair trade  
**RESOURCES** the world is full of resources to be used sustainably  
**SPEED** slower and more varied pace  
**ECONOMY** local first  
**TECH** green technology (e.g., solar panels, wind turbines)  
**ECONOMIC GOAL** unending improvement measured by real quality of life indicators of nations  
**WHOSE NEEDS MATTER** all humans treated as equal partners in co-creating a better world  
**LINES AND BORDERS** people allowed to move more freely across borders than capital  
**FAMILY MODEL** nurturing parent model of family  
**DEVELOPMENT** helping developing countries to engage with the global economic system on their own terms and develop their economies in green and sustainable ways  
**EDUCATION** alternative education; Waldorf, home schooling, etc.  
**FOOD** slow food restaurants, local markets, and cooking at home  
**MODE OF TRANSPORT** "green" cars, bikes, and public transit  
**INDUSTRY** makes machines more sustainable  
**JUSTICE** working to make prisons more humane - no more prisons for profit  
**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** a commitment to make indigenous peoples full citizens of nations  
**PRODUCTION** locally produced: factories in home countries at living wages or fair trade



**BEYOND THE GREEN ECONOMY**

**GOAL** (happy and healthy local communities)  
**PEAK EXPRESSION** (happy and healthy local communities)  
**MINDSET** (the system is flawed to its core and will never change on its own. It will never work to create happy and healthy local communities)  
**WAGES** moving out of the wage economy  
**TRADE** local trade and focus on self-sufficiency  
**RESOURCES** (the world is full of relatives, not resources - subjects, not objects)  
**SPEED** (slower, seasonal pace)  
**ECONOMY** (highly localized and bio-regionalized)  
**TECH** (hand made things. Human technology. The technical term is "work.")  
**ECONOMIC GOAL** (the end of the nation state)  
**WHOSE NEEDS MATTER** (all of life - plants, animals, humans, and spirits treated as equal partners in creating a better world)  
**LINES AND BORDERS** (the end of national borders and nation states)  
**FAMILY MODEL** (community model of family - "it takes a village")  
**DEVELOPMENT** (questioning the notion of development)  
**EDUCATION** (cutting the link between education and school - people learn from life, the community, elders, etc.)  
**FOOD** (traditional, local foods made at home and shared in community)  
**MODE OF TRANSPORT** (bike or walking)  
**INDUSTRY** (question the idea of machines and mechanization - no more heat, beat, and treat)  
**JUSTICE** (restorative justice - weaving people back into community and dealing with the source of crime: broken communities)  
**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE** (recognize that we were all once indigenous peoples. Find our way back to the land and our ancestors. Indigenous people as members of their own equal nations.)  
**PRODUCTION** (hand made locally or traded regionally)

(...) this is Tad's opinion on the matter. What is yours?

# Graduates of 2009, welcome to the alumni/ae community!

and welcome  
also to the rest  
of the class...



Emily Stewart-Wilson



Carly Imai-Compton



Thomas Willington



Tasya Molema



Kevin Park



Tae Ho Lee



Stevie Ziv



Simone Massoud



Ryan Hill



Meredith Wylie



Megan Jarecki



Maxwell Church



Brenna Sobanski



Matthew Bick



Keshia Brubacher



Khalil Halani



Alicia Wilkinson



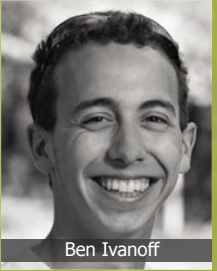
Keira Liberte



Andrei Masliev



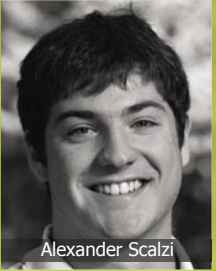
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- 94% of Waldorf grads in North America attend university
- 47% chose arts/humanities as a major
- 42% chose sciences/math as a major
- 50% progress to MA or PhD studies



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