

CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 33, Issue 1
Fall 2011



Abigail Henderson Fuentes, Grade 5



PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL
431 East Court Street, Viroqua

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 14 Grandparents and Special Friends Day
- 21,22 7th grade play:
Much Ado About Nothing
- 26-28 Parent/teacher conferences
No classes
- 31 Faculty Inservice
Enchanted Forest

NOVEMBER

- 11 Martinmas Festival
- 23-25 Thanksgiving break
- 28, 29 Advent Spiral

DECEMBER

- 2 Holiday Faire: noon dismissal
 - 3 Holiday Faire
 - 22 Festival of Light: noon dismissal
Alumni Reunion
-



Charlie Townsley, Class of 2011

Calendar of the Soul

AUTUMN

When to my being's depths I penetrate,
There stirs expectant longing
That self-observing, I may find myself
As gift of summer sun, a seed
That warming lives in autumn mood
As germinating force of soul.

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Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

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FEIN 39-1357578

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is a not-for-profit,
501(c)3 corporation supported through tuition,
gifts to the school, and fundraising events.

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School does not discriminate
on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, economic ability,
or sexual orientation.

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WELCOME

It has been a great summer for enrollment. We have 12 new families joining the school, 3 families returning after an absence, and 6 new siblings, for a total of 22 new and returning students. Below is a list of our new parents, where they are from, names and classes of their children, parents' occupations and some of their interests. I have also included a list of returning families as well as a list of new siblings. I hope that this information will help new and old families find common ground for connections and conversations. Welcome to the new families, welcome back to the returning families, and welcome as well to siblings who are now joining the school. May we all have a wonderful and fruitful year!

—Maureen Karlstad, Enrollment Coordinator

NEW FAMILIES

Mike Beiser, Kendall, WI

Lynn Kronschnabel, Viroqua

August – Violet Kindergarten

Mike is a self-employed vegetable processor.

Interests – food, fermenting, physics, and music.

Lynn has her own cleaning service and is also an insurance processor at the Bright Life Chiropractic Center. Interests – food, nutrition, gardening, dancing, biking, and running.

Daniel & Stephanie Brown, Crystal Lake, IL

Reid – Rosemary Kindergarten

Huxley – Parent-Child program

They have purchased a home in Viroqua and are living on their farm in Wonewoc while they remodel the Viroqua house. They both work from home.

Daniel is an options trader with Lightning Trading.

His interests include reading, biking, outdoor play, and cooking. Stephanie is a project manager for Esse Consulting. Her interests include gardening, knitting, bee-keeping, baking, creative projects, crafts, and do-it-yourself home projects.

Michael Crotser & Jennifer Eissfeldt, Viroqua

Esther – Rosemary Kindergarten

Frances – Parent-Child program

Michael is a stay-at-home dad. His interests include reading, playing music, canoeing, and kayaking. Jennifer is a nurse-midwife working through the Gunderson Lutheran Viroqua clinic. Jennifer's interests include reading, vegetarian cooking, travel, and thrifting.

Elizabeth Hanson, Viroqua

Ted – 5th grade

Her other son, Benjamin, attends Viroqua Middle School. Her daughter, Jamie, attended Pleasant Ridge for several years. Elizabeth works at Village Market. Her interests include reading, knitting, handwork, biking, and walking.

Jacob & Sofya Hundt, Viroqua

Josephine – Violet Kindergarten

Their son Cyrus is at home with mom. Jacob is an alumnus of Pleasant Ridge and one of the founding faculty members of Youth Initiative High School, where he currently works. Jacob is also a founding member of the Driftless Folk School. His interests include reading, geography, community-building, and nonprofits. Sofya, a native of Azerbaijan, is a wonderful homemaker and an active member of the Driftless Folk School. Her interests include hunting, photography, writing, cooking, and languages.

Sean Kelley & Patricia Engle, Viroqua

Aidan – Violet Kindergarten

Sean is the deli manager at the Viroqua Food Co-op.

His interests include cooking, music, and reading.

Patricia is the customer service manager at the Viroqua Food Co-op. Her interests include music, reading, and knitting.

Christopher & Melinda Bond, Illinois

Julienne Masopust – Violet Kindergarten

They now live in Boscobel. Christopher works as an electrician's apprentice in Dubuque, IA. Melinda is a stay-at-home mom. Her interests include Waldorf teacher training, science, art, and nature.

Bobby Masopust, Richmond, Virginia

Julienne Masopust – Violet Kindergarten

Bobby's interests include mechanics, cars, and trucks.

Chris & Meg Newlin, Viroqua

Maple – Rosemary Kindergarten

Chris is a sales rep for RP Active Sports. His interests include biking, outdoor pursuits, and cooking. Meg is a yoga instructor. Her interests include homemaking, cooking, gardening, crafting, and yoga.

Gregg & Elizabeth Roberts, Alaska

Wynne – Violet Kindergarten

Gregg was a teacher and is currently a stay-at-home dad. His interests include weightlifting, skiing, gardening, geography, world news, anything outdoors/nature, and dogs. Elizabeth is a family physician at Hirsch Clinic. Her interests include knitting, yoga, jogging, skiing, gardening, chickens, and cooking.

Pete & Alycann Taylor, Viroqua

Wilma – Rosemary Kindergarten

Pete and Alycann are the owners of Blue Dog Cycles. Pete's interests include trail advocacy, cycling, spending time outside, shoes and jackets, and taking his daughters out for breakfast. Alycann also works at Viroqua Food Co-op as the human resources manager and runs Driftless Gymnastics. Her interests include gardening, hiking, biking, yoga, mothering, working, listening to talk radio and music, and time with family.

Alex & Jennifer Wade, Viroqua

Gibson – Rosemary Kindergarten

Alex is a general surgeon at Vernon Memorial Hospital. His interests include bicycling, gardening, travel, and spending time with family. Jennifer is a stay-at-home mom. Her interests include cooking, gardening, yoga, bicycling, travel, and spending time with family.

Luke & Ruthie Zahm, Madison

Ava – Combined 2nd and 3rd grade

Ben – Rosemary Kindergarten

Both Luke and Ruthie grew up in this area and have recently returned. Luke is a master chef and works at the Waterfront Restaurant in La Crosse. His interests include the outdoors and cooking. Ruthie is a registered nurse at Gunderson Lutheran Hospital in La Crosse. Her interests include knitting, reading, and animals.

RETURNING FAMILIES

Halley & Austin Ashley

Alden – combined 2nd and 3rd grade

Susan Nesbit & Jerry McGeorge

Finley – 6th grade

Natalie & Jerry McIntire

Colin – 8th grade

NEW SIBLINGS

Kale Bernstein, son of Arthur & Angie

Bernstein & Joseph Dhara

1st grade

Lily Elfrink, daughter of Steve & Teri Elfrink

Rosemary Kindergarten

Zelda Hodapp, daughter of Pete &

Erika Hodapp

Rosemary Kindergarten

Isaac DeBoer, son of Marci Lau

Violet Kindergarten

Zephyr LeMaire, son of Allison Sandbeck

& Mark LeMaire

Rosemary Kindergarten

Wren Stevenson, son of Raven &

Emily Stevenson

Violet Kindergarten

SCHOOL NEWS

Thank You

This summer was a very busy time at the school. Many wonderful projects were completed and the building was lovingly prepared for another school year. Thank you to the following folks for all of their work to beautify the school.



NEW CEILING

Apple Corbin, father of Sarah (grade 7), provided the leadership and much of the manpower for the new ceiling in the gym. Robert Perry, his son Eli (grade 7), and Seth Anacker worked with Apple on the project. As you can see in the before and after photos, it was quite a messy job. The following volunteers also helped: Vince Hunt, Marc LeMaire, Jim Neidel, Valorie Schaeffer, Bill and Susan Townsley and their sons, Charlie (YIHS) and Arlo (grade 8), and Barbara Danner and her daughters Clara (VHS) and Margaret (grade 8).



NEW CUBBIES

After completing the ceiling, Apple took on another project—making new cubbies for the hallway outside the 2nd/3rd grade classroom. The classroom was formerly the music room, and when the music room was moved, we realized the need for cubbies. Apple created a set of cubbies to match the existing ones, improving on the original design in the process!

EXTERIOR PAINTING

Lloyd Keesler, a local painter and former parent in the school, took on the job of repainting the outside doors and fascia of the building. As noted in our summer issue of the Calyx, we received 16 gallons of paint from the “Painting a Brighter Future” grant sponsored by the True Value Foundation and Nelson Agri-Center. The colors are the same as before, but the paint job makes all the surfaces look wonderfully new.

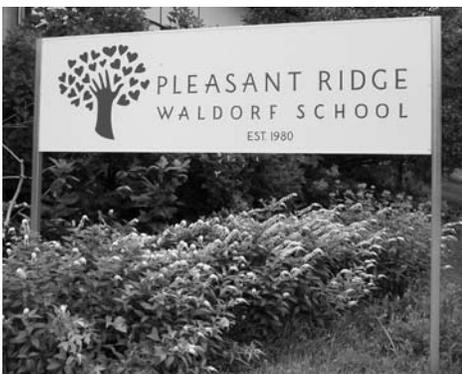


NEW SIGN

Class parent Elliot Medow graciously donated his time and talent to paint new signs for our main entry and for the Old Main Building. We are grateful to Elliot for his beautiful work.

NEW CLASSROOM SPACES

After careful spring planning, the faculty decided to rearrange the layout of the classes. The main impetus for the change was to create an early childhood wing by the kindergarten playground. So the handwork room was moved near the upper grade classrooms and the music room was moved to the former Parent-Child room. The Parent-Child room is now across from the Rosemary Kindergarten. Many hands helped in moving all of the classroom items. The musical instrument storage has found a new home in the cubbies outside the classroom, leaving more space in the classroom for the orchestra to practice.



CLEAN FLOORS

Each summer the custodian takes the time to re-wax all the floors in the school. It is a time-consuming job, but the end result is beautiful. This summer Marc LeMaire, our wonderful custodian, was helped in this herculean effort by master caretaker Kurt Mamroe. Many people have commented on how wonderful the floor looks and some even asked if they should take their shoes off!

Opening Day Ceremony

On the first day of school, the teachers retold the story of “The Golden Goose.” Mr. Shonka, 8th grade teacher, was particularly brilliant in his role as the youngest son. The new first-graders, who had just finished crossing over the bridge into their new role in the school, especially appreciated the performance.



From Greenhouse and Garden to Kitchen and Hot Lunch

The school greenhouse has been well used during its first season and is still active. Parsley and cilantro are thriving under the guidance and care of dedicated parent-volunteer Arwyn Wildingway. The garlic and onions from the school garden are harvested and ready to use. The corn from the school garden is ready to harvest and will be drying in the greenhouse, then ground into cornmeal to be used in the delicious cornbread that is a regular part of the hot lunch program. We are so fortunate to have a school garden close by, a greenhouse outside the kitchen door, with a garden goddess to oversee the growing and our magical chef Jim Hallberg to use the fruits of our labor in the hot lunch program. Many thanks also to all of the parents and community members who have helped with the greenhouse and the garden.



All-School Picnic

On the Friday after school started, the PRWS Board held an early evening picnic on the school grounds. Roast lamb donated by former teacher Bonnie Wideman was expertly prepared by new parent and master chef Luke Zahm. In the finest school tradition, the potluck food items were delicious and there weren't any leftovers. Everyone appeared to have a wonderful time visiting, reconnecting, and meeting people new to the school.



Blue Ribbon at the Vernon County Fair

The theme this year was “Teaching Basic Skills through the Arts.” The student work on display was beautiful and we received a blue ribbon for our efforts.



NEW FACULTY

Betty Link, *First Grade Teacher*

Betty found her way to Waldorf education through her children. When her daughter Megan was ready for kindergarten, Betty discovered the Waldorf approach to child development, including the importance of play for the young child. She has been an ardent advocate of Waldorf education ever since. Once Megan was enrolled at Prairie Hill Waldorf School in Pewaukee, Betty decided to change the direction of her career as a public school speech and language teacher, and eagerly joined the faculty at Prairie Hill as their French teacher. After four years of teaching foreign language, she took up the role of class teacher, and has graduated two classes from Prairie Hill, the classes of 2001 and 2010.

In the year after her second class graduated, Betty and her husband Mike purchased land and built a house south of Viroqua near Liberty Pole. Mike has taken up the work of the land in a big way, creating a working farm complete with an orchard full of nut trees, fruit trees and grape vines, a pasture for sheep, a coop for chickens, and a huge vegetable garden. This is all second nature for Betty, who grew up on a Wisconsin farm.

While Mike continues to work the farm, Betty has been busy creating an inspiring classroom environment for this year's wonderful group of first graders. In watching Betty prepare for the start of the school year, it is obvious that she has a foundation of many years of experience and that she is dedicated to Waldorf education. Betty's enthusiasm for teaching and for her new group of students is evident in all that she does. May the class of 2019 grow strong and prosper!

"I strive in my teaching to foster a sense of wonder, responsibility, and gratitude for the world of nature and the world of mankind. It is one of our duties as teachers—and a true privilege—to help students find the strength and initiative to develop their capacities and to overcome obstacles and limitations. I look forward to nourishing the potential which is just waiting to unfold in these bright-eyed first-graders."

Kate Bergan, *Spanish Teacher*

Kate grew up in Madison and spent much time in her youth in the Driftless region with relatives. She traveled to Mexico with her family while in junior high and dedicated herself to Spanish studies in high school. While in college she studied in Spain and received a B.A. in Spanish, history, and environmental studies from UW-Madison. After college, she wanted to move to a Spanish-speaking country, so she took a job in the Dominican Republic, where she taught ESL and SSL (Spanish as a Second Language) in an international, English-speaking school. Upon returning to the United States she taught junior high English and high school Spanish in Atlanta, Missouri, and organized a school trip to Mexico. Kate then taught Spanish at a large Catholic high school in Cleveland and eventually moved back to Wisconsin to be closer to family. Now that Kate's two sons are students at Pleasant

Ridge, she is excited to take up the job of Spanish teacher at our school and to return to teaching a subject that she has held dear to her heart for many years. We are happy that she is here in our school in a new capacity and look forward to having her carry our Spanish program *con mucho entusiasmo!*

Kate loves all kinds of sports—from mountain biking and running to basketball and soccer. She is looking forward to participating in the Dam Challenge at the Kickapoo Reserve in October. Kate also plays the flute and recorder and is enjoying her guitar and voice lessons with Catherine Parrish of Parrish Music. She loves to read and to play outdoors with her two boys. We are fortunate to be able to welcome such a wonderful and well-rounded person to our faculty.

Philothea Bezin, *French Teacher*

Philothea Bezin was the founding teacher at Pleasant Ridge. She helped with the initial planning of the school and then went off for a year to get Waldorf teacher training. She returned to Viroqua and in the fall of 1980 she began the first class—with three students! In the early days of the school, French was the foreign language that was taught. Philothea has been teaching at Youth Initiative High School and offering tutoring for students of all ages, including many students in our school. We are fortunate to have Philothea rejoining our faculty this year as a guest teacher and bringing French to the 7th and 8th graders.



"The older I grow, the more complex things become, and the less I know. That's why nature, friends, faith, and the simple life appeal to me."

Deborah Thompson, *Parent-Child Program Leader*

Deborah has moved back to the Midwest to be with family, and we are glad she did. After working in the Early Childhood program at the Live Oak Waldorf School in Meadow Vista, California, for many years, Deborah is ready and eager to work with the young children and their parents who make up our Parent-Child program. The program meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and there are still openings in the fall session.



Inspiration

Inspiration is the kind of experience/feeling that never fades, about which you are always glad to share.... Affirmation comes to you as a result; people are drawn to you not because of a transaction or exchange but because of how you make them feel.

During the August in-service and preparation days for the faculty, Beth Blake gave us an in-depth demonstration of dyeing silks with plant pigments. Beth is the mother of Alice (grade six) and Will (grade eight) and is also our school store coordinator. On this day she was working with colors of autumn on silks that will appear soon in the school store. I sat down with her recently to recall some of the things she shared with us that day.

Beth, how did it happen that you were invited to give this dye demonstration?

It started simply as a project I wanted to work on during the summer break. I hoped to create some hand-dyed play silks for the school store, wanted to learn something new, and imagined a clothesline of colorful silks drying in the afternoon sun.

This idea grew as I talked with Rosemary Kindergarten teachers Heidi Burke and Anne-Marie Fryer and realized that they needed some new play silks for their classroom. The actual dying process came together in late summer, and as we watched the beautiful colors come to life in my kitchen, we discussed the possibility of bringing this demonstration to the faculty during in-service.

I should also mention that Diana Horan was a great sounding board for me, giving me advice and encouragement; and Shannon Landis, Violet Kindergarten teacher, offered her support as well as her vast experience dyeing with plant material.

What motivates and inspires you to learn new skills like dyeing silks and focusing your volunteer energy on creating a beautiful school store?

I volunteer at the school store because I never get tired of working with such beautiful toys and art supplies. I've been a Waldorf parent for a decade now, and I still love all that the store has to offer. We are so fortunate to have our store cabinet in the lobby, created by PRWS parents Faith and Seth Anacker, and I think it's a striking piece to be greeted with as you enter our school.

To keep things fresh for me, I'm often searching for new items or a new source of materials. Last year I added plant-dyed wool felt to the case and loved how the colors are so subtle, complex, and wonderful to work with for handwork projects. When I couldn't find a source for plant-dyed silks, I decided to experiment with that myself. Play silks are one of the most popular and versatile items in the store—great for imaginary play and nature table



decoration. I think these new plant-dyed silks will complement the China Silks we will continue to offer from Sarah's Silks. I also dyed smaller sizes of silks, which can be used as juggling silks, "peek-a-boo" cloths for young children, or to add just a bit of color to a nature table.

Could you share some thoughts about your vision for our school store?

I think the school store is a great resource for parents, offering natural playthings as well as quality art supplies and craft materials that reinforce what their children experience in the classroom. The school store really ramps up for the Holiday Faire with a nice variety of gifts, but our cabinet in the lobby is available every day, making it a convenient place to pick up a birthday gift or supplies needed for home.

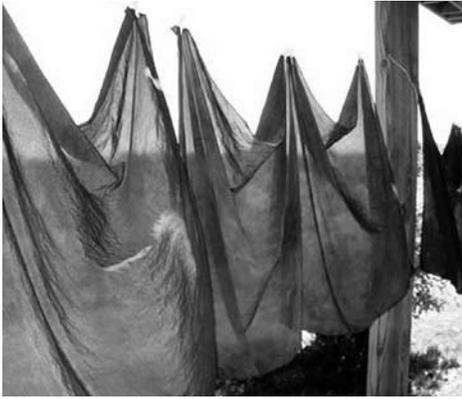
What kinds of skills might other people bring to the school store in order for it to be the inspiring resource for parenting that you imagine?

The school store is a terrific place for volunteers who enjoy "playing store." I would welcome anyone who is enthusiastic about researching products, someone who enjoys coordinating details or working with the budget, and anyone who wants to make and donate items to the store.

What kinds of items might be helpful for parents to make as we prepare for the gift giving at Christmas as well as birthday gifts throughout the year?

We are fortunate to have such talented people in our parent body. I would love to tap into this talent, ask for donated handmade items, and offer up a unique selection of gifts at the Holiday Faire. There is always a demand for handmade Waldorf dolls, simple gnomes and nature table folk, bean bags, felt animals, and crowns. Wooden blocks, wooden toys, swords, shields, and stilts come to mind as well. Please contact me if you have any interest in making items for the store or want to join me in my efforts.

continued on page 6



Inspiration continued

Is there a place for classes in crafts like needle felting, doll making, knitting, for example, that older students and parents could attend?

There is such potential here for classes, handwork circles, and ongoing workshops. I can envision a group of new parents coming together to learn about creating nature tables in their homes. Meeting regularly to work on handmade items for the school store could happen at school or at someone's home and is a great way to build friendships and community. Bringing in teachers to instruct a group in the making of a Waldorf doll, or to teach about needle felting or wet felting, would engage both parents and students. I would love to hear what the community is interested in doing and see what we can make happen.

Interviewer's note: Ever since I first met Beth, her enthusiasm for handwork, for Waldorf education, and for service has truly stood out, and our conversation reminded me of this quote which someone once sent me:

Inspiration is similar to motivation, but the latter can be misguided. Inspiration is the kind of experience/feeling that never fades, about which you are always glad to share instead of hoard. When you are doing something that inspires you, you are happy to give it away and help others who want to do the same. Affirmation comes to you as a result; people are drawn to you not because of a transaction or exchange but because of how you make them feel. It needs to be singular and personal.

—Mary Christenson

CURRICULUM

(Ed. Note: The following report was sent out to all of the parents of the Grade 1–2 class. It is reprinted here to give you a taste of the wonderful work of the specialty programs at Pleasant Ridge, specifically the music program.)

The Music Program in Grade 1–2 Year-End Report, June 2011

I visited Grade 1–2 each week for a half hour to introduce and guide the students in learning to play the wooden Choroi flutes. Ms. Ximena joined us as well for each class.

We began with the one-hole flutes, which are able to produce two tones. There are three different types of one-hole flutes, each able to sound a different combination of tones, which all together can produce the notes of the pentatonic (five-tone) scale. The pentatonic scale contains a series of tones that are spaced apart and found to be more pleasing and tonally accessible to the younger children.

The one-hole flutes, which the children learned to handle with great care and reverence, were passed out randomly each class so that the children did not know which of the three they would receive. In fact, at first they did not even know that there were three types. This was discovered through listening activities. Gradually the children were able to distinguish the different flutes by their tone combinations, determine how many different tones were being produced, and find the “matches”—those flutes that had the same tones. The matching game quickly became a favorite of the students and soon they became so tuned in (pun intended) that they could, on their own and quite quickly, form three groups where the members of each group had the same tones on their flute.

With our three groups, we were able to connect the tones to make melodies by having a leader who would indicate to the group whether to play the open or closed tone. The students each had a turn being the leader and experiencing creating their own melody. The culmination of this work was their performance using the one-hole flute at the Festival of Light in December.

After the holidays, the children each received a pentatonic flute, one that has five holes and can produce all the tones that previously they could only make using all three of the one-hole flutes. Thus began the complicated work of establishing the fingering pattern of the pentatonic flute where some fingers are “birds” that can land on their nest and fly away, while others are “branches” that never leave the “tree” (flute). The story of the birds living in the tree and the branches that support their nests unfolds to guide the children in finger independence and an awakening of their finger dexterity.

Working with Grade 1–2, I am laying the groundwork for what comes later with string instruments and orchestra. Care and reverence for instruments, listening, following a conductor, playing only when requested, and making beautiful tones, while nurturing the students' own musical creativity by allowing them to create their own melodies and musical expression, are essential elements in music through the grades.



—Monika Sutherland

Why Shakespeare in the 7th Grade?

To look at the beauty of bringing Shakespeare to 7th graders, it is important to first take a glimpse at the 7th graders themselves. They have many needs: to move physically, as well as finding stillness and routine; to be challenged; to feel intensity; to feel like they are making a contribution to the world; to be taught both the predictability of the facts and also the spontaneity of myths and legends; to be heard; to delve inward to further their destiny; and to belong, yet be an individual.

Throughout the world, William Shakespeare is perhaps one of the best-known men in history. To study and perform one of his works is to go back in time, and yet his words and wisdom provide timeless lessons for the 7th grader.

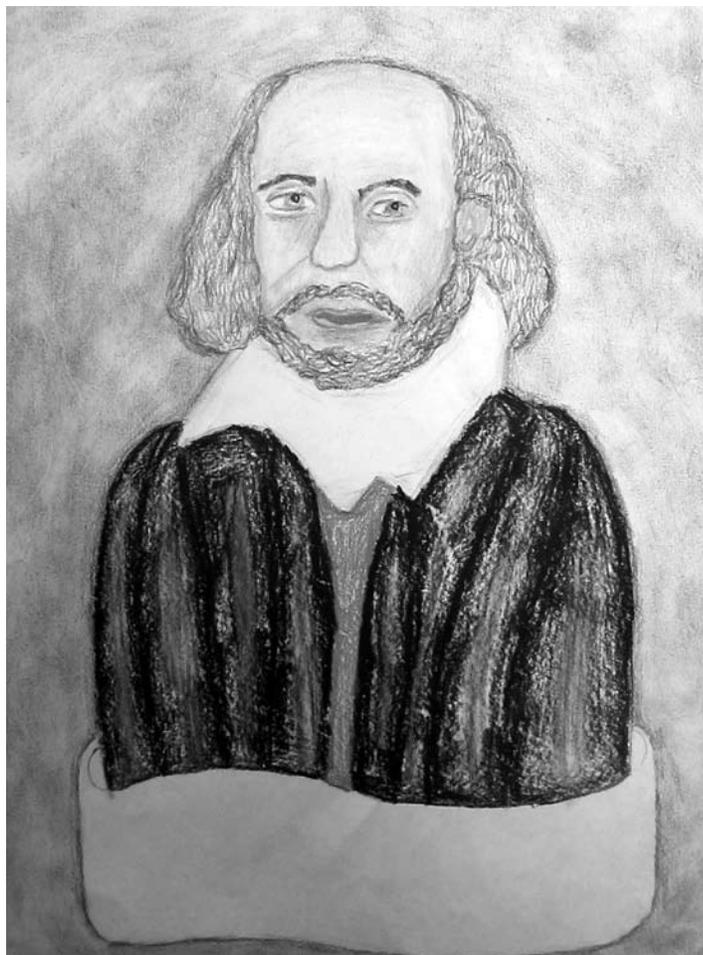
Shakespeare was not known to write the most original plays. Indeed he took many themes from myths, legends, and history itself. What he had that made him so remarkable was his ability to breathe such life into his characters. As students take on roles, they are challenged by a language that is not quite so familiar to them (although William did invent over 2,000 words for the English language) and they must find the intensity, the essence of each character to portray them fully. By also demonstrating expressive gestures they aid the audience in relating to the plot and characters.

As the students explore the themes presented in the play, they dig deeper into real-life situations that are beginning to deepen in themselves as they embark upon adolescence.

It takes great effort as a class to put on a Shakespeare production. In fact, it is quite a leap from previous class plays. The students must be accountable for themselves so that their classmates can rely on them to say what they need to say, be where they need to be, and yet be able to be flexible and quick. After the production, a great sense of accomplishment and pride is felt in presenting this feat to the community.

Personally, I love doing Shakespeare in 7th grade because it ties in with the study of the Renaissance beautifully. I try to capture the simplicity of the set and costumes and put emphasis on the language, just as it was done in Elizabethan England during the height of the arts in Europe. We also have the wonderful opportunity of seeing a Shakespeare production in the fall at a local theatre so the children can experience it professionally just before we perform our very own production.

What a pleasure it is for a teacher to provide such a rich subject as William Shakespeare and his works. To end, who better than to quote Will himself:



Coriander Dehlin, Grade 7

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

(From *As You Like It*)

—Jackie Kolenko, Grade 7 Teacher

7th Grade Play: *Much Ado About Nothing*
Friday & Saturday, October 21 & 22

ALUMNI

What I Live For and What Sustains Me

There are many things I live for. I live for purpose, I live for the future. I live for the small moments that make up life, the insignificant moments that somehow make me remember how precious life really is. I live for my mom's advice, my dad's humor, my brother's love, my friends' laughter.



And while this may seem meaningless and irrelevant to someone without my personal experiences, to me these moments fill me with joy. I am immersed in happiness, knowing that I can survive and thrive on the pure simplicities in life.

There are no borders to what I live for; I am forever expanding, gaining knowledge and experience. With that knowledge comes purpose, passion, interest, and exploration. I am captivated, captivated by these thoughts and emotions. I am a canvas, ready to absorb the blissful, the dismal, the challenging, the effortless, the humorous, the morose, and the generally colorful moments that weave their way through life.

To define what I live for would be to pick away at the bones and structures of what fulfills me. I am simply inspired. Not prepared to ascertain my purpose. I choose to be free from these labels and instead welcome exposure, culture, and adventure into my life. I am sustained by my expectations for the future, jumping from comfort and choosing to be swept away by the great unknown. I am willing to embrace all obstacles that may be in store, because without these, the adventure is lost.

—Glenn Sherwin, Class of 2008

Glenn is currently studying at The Oxbow School in Napa, CA. She is thriving there, and says that the academics are rich and fulfilling. It is the perfect capstone to her Pleasant Ridge education.

Maggie Welch '00

Maggie graduated from Iowa State University with a B.S. in engineering. She is

currently living in Nashville, Tennessee, working for General Mills as an engineer. She bought her own home about a year and a half ago and says she is realizing more and more that home ownership is hard work. Maggie is currently working with a few food production plants in the Richland Center area, so she travels back to the Viroqua area regularly. After her current assignment wraps up in the next few months, she hopes to spend more time in Tennessee at home and with her friends. Life after Pleasant Ridge, high school, and college is an exciting and wonderful time, and Maggie says she is learning more and more every day!

Joseph Ecklund '00

After high school Joseph lived in Madison for a year, where he participated in theater. Then he attended the American Eurythmy School in California for two years, after which he came back to Viroqua and worked at the Viroqua Food Co-op while self-schooling on philosophy, economics, and the principle of non-aggression. During that time he became reacquainted with Erin Kidulson (also a Waldorf student from the Pleasant Ridge class of '00) and they have developed a committed, loving relationship. For a short time Joseph ran One Sun Farm and Bakery before finishing this past summer season with Ridgeland Harvest CSA. This winter Erin and Joseph will be moving to Washington state, where Erin will continue school with the goal of becoming a Network Chiropractor. Joseph will provide support and, as he says, "continue to dedicate myself to the study, practice, and advocacy of the non-aggression principle and look to find ways to be practically employed educating people about it in order to effect social change for the better."

DEVELOPMENT

Do you remember the excitement of the first day of school when you were a child? This fall our school parents also had much to anticipate, including seeing all the renovations that took place on our buildings and grounds during the summer. The cleanup was finally finished and the classrooms were ready. We celebrated this opening week by hosting an all-school open house and picnic. One new parent, Luke Zahm, grilled lamb that Bonnie Wideman, a beloved former teacher, had donated for the occasion. Parents brought potluck dishes—we had a feast!

We had a wonderful turnout of families and teachers on a gorgeous September evening. It was the first time that many saw the new ceiling in the gym; the new Music, Handwork, and Parent-Child rooms; new cubbies, signs, and the manicured grounds. These are the highlights, but there are always many other tasks that volunteers do for teachers in preparing their rooms.

Times like this give me pause, and I ponder what we would do without volunteers. They lovingly serve Pleasant Ridge in many capacities. Sometimes members of our greater community offer to volunteer in the library, the office, or in other activities so they can be around children and share in a community atmosphere.

As serendipity would have it, a friend gave me a book to read by Torin Finser, a Waldorf teacher and leader, entitled *Initiative: A Rosicrucian Path of Leadership*. While Finser wrote of the challenges facing leaders today due to the many negative forces in the world, he also noted one form of leadership not often identified or even fully appreciated, namely the many volunteers who make a

huge contribution to our communities. I especially like the following passages as I feel they speak to us at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School:

“Volunteerism is especially important in terms of the cultural life of a community; one might say the heart and soul of our local surroundings....” (p. 106)

“Those of us who are volunteers are called to serve out of the deep folds of idealism.... [T]rue volunteers serve out of intrinsic values with no form of recompense. We serve not just for the sake of the institutions that draw us together, but also out of a deep-seated desire to grow as human beings. Volunteerism assists in personal development. We learn, grow, and develop new capacities through our community work. What may have been incomplete can become whole thanks to working with others. We can become more than we have been thanks to our service.” (p. 107)

As we begin another new school year, let us be grateful for the volunteer energy that blessed this school into being, that has sustained us into this thirty-first year and on, now, into the coming year. What would we do without each other? Thank you all!

—Mary Christenson, Development Director

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Many thanks to those who have supported our school July 15 – September 21, 2011

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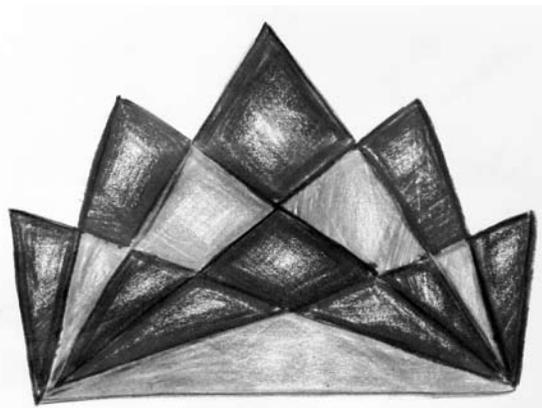
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