A Word from Ms. Mall...

As we begin a fresh year I would like to begin with a sincere apology for dropping the newsletter for the past two months. While many wonderful things have happened for our school over the weeks of our first semester I, like so many of you, have been spending a lot of time with my memories of Owen, Nicholas, Jane, and Stacia. Our school is such a

28th: 12:30 Release to Prep for Winter Faire...

29th: WINTER FAIRE!

6th Annual Winter Faire @ Winterberry Charter School, 11-4pm

BRING YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS... EVERYONE IS

program developer Bonnie River and one of her co-instructors Thom Schaefer. Also attending this training were two teachers and one founding parent from Birchtree Charter School, a new school inspired by Waldorf methods that has opened in the Mat-Su school district. We are hoping that other schools, both currently in existence and those beginning the process will also consider joining our Alaska hybrid. This team will return in February to work with our teachers again. We are all looking forward to their return.

During the second week of January a delegation of teachers, parents, and Boars members from Winterberry will attend the 2011 Alliance Waldorf Teacher Conference. This conference always delights and reinvigorates all who attend. Mr. V will be spending the week prior to the conference at another school in California where he will observe and be mentored by a longtime Waldorf movement teacher.

Our three body meetings have experienced great success this year in our search for a new site. Together we have worked to examine and eliminate several possibilities. Currently this group has tasked two committees to research both the Marlow proposal as well as a site in midtown surrounded by trees and adjacent to a lake and a park. We will be meeting again on January 27th to hear updates on both sites and see if a decision can be made.

Also coming up will be the WCC elections. Working as part of this body has proven rewarding for many in the community. The body meets monthly to discuss and determine issues involved in governing the school. If you are interested in learning more about the positions and the WCC as a whole please contact Melissa Janigo or Meg Eggleston.

Our annual Winter Faire and Head, Heart, and Hands Auction are coming up in the next three months as well as the second visit of our mentors George and Donna. It is our hope that we will be able to offer a parent evening during their visit. Please let your child's teacher know if there are any topics that you are particularly interested in learning more about.

Blessings,

Shanna

11.1.10: First grade has been immersed in a world of numbers and math with the glorious Queen Equalis and all the members that make up her kingdom and beyond. Her love of numbers has sent her and Jester Julius on a quest for where the numbers live in nature; three body parts make up an insect, six sides to one cell of a honeycomb, eleven stars in the constellation Orion.

We are learning to count by 2's, 3's, 5's and 10's, learning to write our Roman numerals, writing our numbers up to twelve, and using all the

operations of math. It's a fun and exciting time to be in first grade and we are so very pleased with our work.

- Ms. Drinen

A time came when time itself split apart, and sleeping time separated from waking time. This moment was called the Dreamtime. At this moment everything started to burst into life.

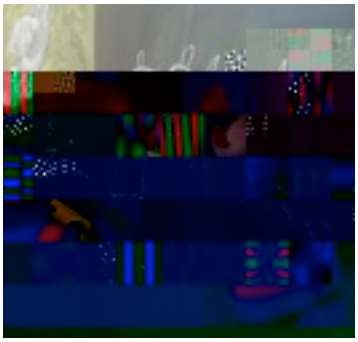
The sun rose through the surface of the Earth and shone warm rays onto the hollows, which became waterholes. Under each waterhole lay an Ancestor, an ancient man or woman who had been asleep through the ages. The sun filled the bodies of each Ancestor with light and life, and the Ancestors began to give birth to children. Their children were all the living things of the world, from the tiniest grub wriggling on a eucalyptus leaf to the broadest-winged eagle soaring in the blue sky.

Rising from the waterholes, the Ancestors stood up with mud falling from their bodies. As the mud slipped away, the sun opened their eyelids and they saw the creatures they had made from their own bodies. Each Ancestor gazed at his creation in pride and wonderment. Each Ancestor sang out with joy: "I am!" One Ancestor sang, "I am kangaroo!" Another sang, "I am kookaburra!" The next sang, "I am Honey-Ant!" and the next sang, "I am Lizard!"

As they sang, naming their own creations, they began to walk. Their footsteps and their music became one, calling all living things into being and weaving them into life with song. The ancestors sang their way all around the world. They sang the rivers to the valleys and the sand into dunes, the trees into leaf and the mountains to rise above the plain. As they walked they left a trail of music.

Then they were exhausted. They had shown all living things how to live, and they returned into the Earth itself to sleep. And, in honor of their Ancestors, the Aborigines still go Walkabout, retracing the steps and singing the songs that tell the story of life."



- Ms. Eggleston

10.26.10: The fourth grade has begun their first Norse Mythology block with curiosity and a sense of power. As we chose colors for a painting of the Norse God's creation story we spoke of bold reds for the fire of Muspell flaming up into the icy blues of Niflheim's glaciers, the two blending in the middle the1the fire of Muspell flaming up into the icy

princess images but beings struggling with experiences not so far from those we can identify with ourselves at times, even as we struggle to be tolerant and accepting of our peers and older or younger school mates on the play yard.

- Ms. Mayer

10.27.10: We have been studying the myths of Ancient Persia and Mesopotamia during these past weeks. The stories of Zarathustra and Gilgamesh have captured students' imaginations and easily fueled their own compositions. We have been practicing using descriptive words and self- and peer-editing. The stories and writing have been so involved that we have fallen behind our Block Rotation Schedule! We will delay the start of our next block by one week.

11.9.10: EGYPT: We are finally bringing our study of Egypt to a close. For the past week, fifth grade has been researching and studying subjects such as King Tut, Egyptian Geography, Tomb Robbing, Pyramids, Mummies, Egyptian Gods, cats, and the Sphinx. They have written research papers and created projects of their choice. Mia, for example, has been leading a large group of students in practicing a skit of an episode in a myth of the Egyptian Gods. David is constructing a beeswax war chariot. Rydin and Audrey can't wait to share some mysterious masterpieces that they have created at home. Curtis' presentation today on Egyptian Cats brought a forest of hands raised with questions about Egyptian pets, cat mummification, and cat funerals. Egyptians' interest in preparing for life after death has captivated fifth grade.

12.18.10: Geometry Block: At the beginning of our geometry block, we discovered the characteristics of points, lines, and circles. Next, we explored triangles. We took triangles apart to find that the angles of any triangle can be added to equal 180 degrees. We have built 3-4-5 triangles to create right angles as the Egyptians did when relocating their fields after the Nile's yearly flood. And we drew and described the characteristics of equilateral, isosceles, and scalene triangles. We concluded our geometry block by comparing and contrasting the characteristics of common quadrilaterals.

Geography: We started studying North American geography this past week with letters from our pen pals at Wellspring Waldorf school in the rural town of Chelsea, Vermont. The 12 students in Wellspring's 5th/6th grade class had written and addressed letters to every student in our class. Their letters described a little bit about their hobbies, their small towns, their animals, and their maple syrup. Enclosed in the package were maple candies homemade by the family of a student in their class. This week, the students wrote back, telling their pen pals things about their lives in Alaska that they thought might be interesting to young Vermonters. I was wishing for some dry smoked salmon to send across the country, but I did not have any on hand.

-Ms. Johnson

11.9.10: Sixth grade has just finished our first real history block: Greece and the founding of Rome. We studied Greek philosophical thought (anyone remember what a syllogism is?), as well as the cultural and historical events that shaped the golden age of Greece. We learned just enough about the founding of Rome to make us eager to take it up again in the weeks before winter break.

As I write, snow is falling: our first real snowfall this year. I anticipate high energy this week, and much joy and enthusiasm on the playground. The sixth grade is very cohesive socially right now (I'm finding and knocking on wood), with whole-class (or nearly) games being the predominate mode of play at recess. The social energy of these 11 and 12 year olds is extraordinary, and we are channeling it with much more social interaction during main lesson in the form of group work.

Energy is the theme—well, not officially, that is for 7th grade—and these students are ready, for the most part, to reach out into the real world. Real-world projects are good for this age, and our first real venture culminated last week, with

a First Fridays showing at Modern Dwellers, which we shared with the 7th and 8th grade class. More is on the horizon, both for fundraising and for community outreach. This class is ready to be part of the world!

Blessings,

-Mr. Crawford

11.9.10: "Whenever possible, please try to have the students see geometry in movement." ~Rudolf Steiner

The 7th and 8th grade would like to send a big thank you to Sara Robicheaux for putting on November's First Friday event at Modern Dwellers. This was a fundraising event for our 8th grade trip. The 7th and 8th graders work really hard getting ready for this art showing, and now, their oil paintings, silk paintings, and handmade bags are on display and up for sell at the Modern Dwellers Chocolate Lounge. The proceeds will go towards the 8th grade trip fund, so thank you for your support. 6th graders also have their amazing sketches up for display and sell to help fundraise for their 8th grade trip. So go by the Chocolate Lounge on 36th and New Seward to check out and support our students reach their goal for their 8th grade trip.

The 7th and 8th grade would also like to send a thank you to Morgan Stenson for donating skeletons for our upcoming anatomy block. We are looking forward to the experience of putting together these skeletons. We will also use them as models for sketching bones during our Anatomy and Physiology block.

Thank you to James Bowers, Colleen and Jay Bickford, Sarah Robicheaux, Della and Dave Swarts for helping the 8th grades facilitate their 8th grade meetings after school on Thursdays. Thank you 7th and 8th grade parents for your continuous support and dedication! I thoroughly enjoy teaching, connecting, and learning form all your children. Most of all, we are just have a ball! An important reminder: **8th grade Parent Meeting Tuesday, November 16th at 6:00 p.m.**

Now for a scope of what has been happening during main lesson: The emphasis of the seventh and eight grade geometry unit focuses on accuracy and content; the material presented is a balance between the thinking realm and the artistic. For the first week of our four week geometry block, the seventh and eight graders reviewed general geometry concepts including: circle and polygon terminology, angle measurement, types of triangles, quadrilaterals, and three dimensionality. We then launched into an in-depth study of geometry: using a straight edge and compass, our first task was to construct a series of geometrical drawings, known as the "Euclidean constructions." Students also participated in advanced constructions such as: equiangular spirals, rotations of circles, the limacon, and the 24th division of a circle with all its diagonals.

As we studied Euclid's constructions, we also learned that he was a mathematician who collected and organized geometric constructions and proofs dating back to the Babylonian, Egyptian and early Greek mathematicians such as Thales and Pythagoras in his magnificent book, *The Elements.*

The first theorem we attempted to prove from *The Elements* was Euclid's Shear and Stretch theorem. From Euclid's Shear and Stretch theorem, students learned to calculate the areas of given regular polygons, non-right triangles, squares, trapezoids, and parallelograms.

A new level of consciousness opened for the 7th/8th grade students as they began to see the mathematics unfold in geometry. We spent a significant amount of time on the construction of the pentagon as well as understanding the properties of the pentagon. Through the process of constructing the nested pentagon and our pentagram drawing, we discovered many geometrical properties: every triangle within is either a tall or obtuse-angled isosceles triangle, there are many similar rhombuses and trapezoids, and each angle of the pentagon is trisected by the pentagram that sits inside it. After observing these geometric properties we attempted to theorize: given that the angle in the pentagon is

trisected, what are all the angles inside each of the two types of isosceles triangles? We derived a mathematical equation and solved for each of the interior angles.

We took another look at the nested pentagons and pentagrams to for the relationship of the line segments. Once the 7th/8th grade students had carefully copied all line segment lengths positioned in order of length, longest to shortest, they discovered the two amazing properties about the organized segments: the length of any one of the line segments is equal to the sum of the lengths of the previous two shorter segments and that each line segment is approximately 61.8% longer than the previous one. This ratio, approximately 1.618 to 1, is known as the golden ratio, or !. After constructing the golden rectangle, golden spiral, and the golden triangle we were pleased to discover that the ratio of the length to the width is !:1; and, similarly, it is also the ratio of the diagonal to the side of the pentagon. Our final thrust with the golden ratio was to examine the mysterious Fibonacci progression of numbers (where every unit was equal to 1/8) and create another golden rectangle. This effort developed a new shape, a logarithmic spiral, merging the naturally occurring pattern of Fibonacci numbers and the Golden Rectangle.

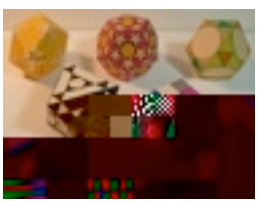
7th and 8th graders also proved and practiced the Pythagorean theorem to fine the lengths of all the sides of a right triangle. We developed mathematical concepts for the relationship of the sides by probing our algebraic equations: we replicated Pythagoras' method for generating whole number length right triangles e.g.: 3-4-5, 5-12-13; Plato's formula e.g.: 8-15-17, 6-8-10; and, finally, the Arabian or Euclidean formula that generates all whole number "triples" e.g.: 36-77-85, 48-55-73.

We are currently constructing five three-dimensional platonic solid: the cube, tetrahedron, octahedron, icosahedron and the dodecahedron. Each Archimedean solid is beautifully colored and are rapidly decorating the ceiling of our classroom. They seem to be like blooming mushrooms; you never know when they are going to pop up. We will continue our geometry unit for another week calculating square root algorithms as well as surfaces and volumes when given basic platonic solids.

11.24.10: While our Geometry Intensive comes to a close, seventh and eighth graders are finishing their End-of-the-Block Projects. All 7th and 8th grade students constructed five three-dimensional platonic solid: the cube, tetrahedron, octahedron, icosahedron and the dodecahedron. The assignment was to paint and make a mobile with their hanging solids to display from the ceiling of our classroom. Each Platonic and/or Archimedean solid is beautifully painted and the mobiles are rapidly decorating the ceiling of our classroom. They seem to be like blooming mushrooms; you never know when they are going to pop up. Please do stop by to see these intricately painted pieces of art. During the final weeks of this block, students learned to calculate square root algorithms, surface areas, and volumes of solids. We also focused on platonic solid vocabulary words: polyhedron, edge, vertex, and dihedral angle. Understanding these terms allowed us to arrive at the four properties of the Platonic solids. Eighth graders have also been studying the biographies of Kepler, Euclid, Archimedes, Plato, and Euler, the fathers of geometry. Eighth grades will need to be ready to turn in their 5-10 paragraph biography as well as be ready to present on Monday, when we return from Thanksgiving.

In addition to our fulfilling lessons, our eighth graders have been busy fundraising for their eighth grade trip. We appreciate your support, contributions, and hope that not only will our fundraising events help the eighth grades raise money to reach their goal to go to London, England. We hope that our fundraising events will in turn build community. As the months continue to get darker, the eighth graders hope that they can help you leap out of bed by providing fresh hot coffee, hot chocolate, and baked goods in the morning at Winterberry from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. This is a great way to socialize with your school community over coffee and baked good. Running late and you don't have time to make breakfast, no worries; you can grab a cup of coffee and muffin at Winterberry. As 8th graders will provide to-go cups, we want to make a conscious effort to eliminate waste, so if you can, please bring your own coffee mug. Here are some additional fundraising events you can participate in and enjoy.

- Ms. Besh



10.28.10: WEP would like to thank a few folks for their generous gifts of time, energy and materials!

Thank you to...

...WEP parents Christina Eubanks (RaeAnn's mom), and John Whitesides (Lauren and John's dad), for much-needed contributions to our crafts/activities supplies.

...our friends Katie, Darla and Erin at The Upstairs Studio, for inviting us on a studio tour and telling us about their life as artists.

Tips For Parenting as a Single Mom

An Interview with Parent Coach Leslie Mayer

Do you feel stressed parenting as a single mom? Do you feel like your going insane and are unsure on how to continue taking care of the children on your own? If you answered, "yes" you're not alone. There are many single moms who are struggling to find a way to cope with the daily challenges of parenting. To help understand common parenting challenges that single moms face and how to cope with parenting as a single mom, I have interviewed Parent Coach, Leslie Mayer.

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

"I am a certified parent coach, through the Parent Coaching Institute, as well as a certified Waldorf teacher. I currently fuse these two perspectives in my work within the public Waldorf school movement by helping support

energy, a daily lifestyle based on rhythm has the momentum to carry you forward regardless of immediate strife. When you have the consistent pattern with dinner at 6:30, bath at 8:00, in bed at 8:30, and lights out at 9:00 and me time at the end of the day, the household will soon begin to run on its own instead of depending on the surmountable will of a mother to make it happen each night. We are all creatures of habit."

"Keep an image of your child at his/her best near your heart at all times. Even the most difficult children have moments of peace and offer glimmers of all that they could become. Sometime you may need to go back far, all the way to the birth, in order to find this image. I hold the memory of a photo where my child is sweetly cradling a stuffed elephant all swaddled in his blanket. He is staring compassionately into the animal's eyes. Calling up this image when the hormones of puberty take over his body and caring and kindness seem far from his capacity helps me gain perspective and find the empathy to support him instead of just being angry with him."

"Limit screen time. It seems like a helpful tool to let your child watch a video or play a computer game; he is busy, you get a break, and it is what society as a whole is doing. Really think about it for a minute. If your child is sitting still for two hours before bedtime watching a show, is his body going to be ready to go to sleep? Or is your child going to say, "Wow, I am rested and now I need to move". This lack of movement is also deceptive. Even though the physical body is still, the brain is highly active in an automatic response mode while looking at a screen. So not only is the body ready to move, the brain is wide-awake and on alert status. This pendulum of energy levels can create distress and non-adaptive behavior in children. By limiting the screen time, you are allowing your child to modulate his own activity level to a more balanced and even level."

"Take care of yourself. Ask yourself, "What activities relax me? What activities energize me?" Figure out how to incorporate these into your weekly routine. It may be a longer-term vision that needs some temporary installments to get going. Just remember that a few moments for your own can pay back in hours of more manageable family time due to decreased stress. As quick fixes, look into childcare swaps and places that offer onsite child care, such as some grocery stores, health clubs, or churches. Sometimes the opportunity to shop alone can be that break you need."

What type of professional help is available for single mom's who want to be successful in parenting?