

Autumn 2005

It has been a wonderful beginning of the year with the drop-in day, the parent evening, and our Michaelmas celebration. It was a warm feeling on our parent evening to see you so willing to participate in order to better understand what your children experience, and what beautiful felt balls you made that became comets during Michaelmas!

We enjoyed a week of outdoor school, which we find a supportive transition from the out breath of summer to the in breath of Autumn. Our haying circle under the open sky was a blessing and then to be lying on blankets underneath the pines for story and lullabies...

Three gifts that you can give your child this Autumn that will help support their school life are warm clothes, rest, and warm meals. Heavy cotton or wool undershirts and long underwear for the colder days, mittens and hats and for the even colder days, a one-piece snow suit over clothes is best. A seven o'clock bedtime is ideal. Hot oatmeal and warm soups and teas to nourish and warm the body. This will be an excellent foundation for the beautiful winter days ahead.



Children play at the Michaelmas celebration.

KINDERGARTEN CORNER

Reflections from the Morning Glory Class

We welcome Ms. Ellen! The faculty feels so blessed to have a volunteer from 9:00 to 3:00 every Tuesday! Ms. Ellen helps with the Kindergarten during the morning on the playground, then joins us for circle and snack, working with the children on seasonal activities and assisting all three classes with dishwashing. She joins aftercare for lunch and relieves Ms. Clements for a spell, making it possible for her to meet with the Lead teachers on pedagogical subjects. Ellen Kelly was

my next-door neighbor in Redding during the twenty years I spent growing up there. Always a dear friend to my parents and me, Ellen has been with me throughout all my major milestones. She and her husband, Brian lovingly tell the story of the first time we met and I was wearing footy pajamas at age three. Countless are the times since then when they have supported and cared for me as family. Ellen comes to us after a lengthy career in corporate finance, having

decided to pursue a second career in education. She is in the process of studying education at a local university, and determining what age group and/or subject she feels best suited to teach. She recognized Apple Blossom as a place where she could give her time to a growing community of young families, and has generously offered her time to us. Ellen's newfound commitment to education and love for children has been a force of tremendous support to our school so far. We look forward to sharing many happy Tuesdays with Ms. Ellen!

-Erika Loker, Kindergarten

ON DISCIPLINE

Reflections from the Merry Bell Class

They are so many components that make up discipline within the Kindergarten. Rhythm is an essential component, creating a rhythmic day with elements of in breath and out breath (circle is an in breath, free play an out breath) and creating a rhythmic week with the same activities and snack occurring on the same day of the week is important to maintaining classroom discipline.

Keeping the Kindergarten neat and tidy and paying particular attention to the doll corner. Are all the dolls off the floor? Are they dressed? Oftentimes when play begins to be disruptive in a particular corner, I will tidy up that corner and just that gesture can often right the play.

It is important for us to set boundaries for our children so that they feel safe. Clarity within and developing an inner sense of authority is an important development for a teacher and a parent as well. If one is uncertain about a demand that one is making, the child will sense that immediately. In contrast, if a child senses that there is an inner conviction that "I am the teacher or parent and You are in my guardianship," the child will relax into this and will feel freer to be themselves.

All children want to do the "right" thing. This is important to keep in mind for the times when the child pushes the boundaries set for them. If children push these boundaries within our Kindergarten, I always have the support of Ms. Loker saying, "I heard Ms. Marquis, say" This is very powerful and I would suggest that it be used at home between mother and father. If a "you may listen to the teacher" is met with resistance, and the rhyme "Apples, peaches, pumpkin pie, who's not ready, holler, 'I!'" does not produce the desired results, the child may be given a task to do. If this is met with resistance, the child may sit on the rocker with the teacher or be given a resting spot. An "I imagine tomorrow you will do the right thing" can be helpful to say out loud, both to reassure the child and to allow the other children to see that though the child did not do what the teacher was asking, the teacher has every expectation that the child will in the future.

Not long ago during outside play, I brought a child in to Ms. Loker as the child was being very disruptive and just could not do the "right" thing. Ms. Loker's response was: "Oh, you must be very tired. Come, I will make a cozy spot for you to lie in and you can take a rest." Children so want to do what is asked of them. When they don't, it is important to observe the reasons for this. Ms. Loker knew that at that moment this child simply could not do the right thing. She understood this and quickly got to the heart of the matter. She met the child with love and warmth. This open-hearted gesture is key to discipline within a Waldorf early childhood class.

Another most important key to discipline is in the adult modeling behavior. How am I with the parents? How am I with my colleagues? How am I with the students? Am I conscious of my gestures? When I set the table do I do it lovingly? When I clean up do I do it with care and love or am I resentful? Do I follow through with tasks and long term projects? When I have a problem with someone do I address the problem directly with that person? Am I generous? Am I inclusive? Most of all, am I striving for these? For it is in the striving that the children most respect the adult and each other.

I must say that it is far easier for me to carry all of this into my work than into my home life as a parent. Parenting is the most difficult of all occupations. I am seeing that the difference is that as a teacher I can maintain my objectivity but I struggle with this as a parent of a teenager.

So this is my parenting task -- to work at stepping outside my family life, to look at things from a distance and not to be caught up in the emotion of it all. If I could achieve this, I would be far more effective. A mentor of mine once offered me the wise phrase: "Act rather than react!" To make conscious decisions with clarity of thought is an important rule in teaching and parenting.

Always I remember that it is the spiritual world that is my guardian, and so as I go to sleep at night, I visualize a child who needs particular care and ask for guidance and so often by morning something has shifted for this child. This I remind parents when they are tired and weary and have no more answers: it is at night as you are sleeping that the most important work is done.

-Marcia Marquis, Kindergarten

WHAT IS ...

Apple Blossom School and Family Center

A developing Member of WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North American) AWSNA is the equivalent association for Waldorf Grade Schools.

Considering a donation to the Apple Blossom School and Family Center?

We were incorporated on June 24th, and are in the process of readying our application for 501c3 nonprofit status. Contributions made to the Apple Blossom School and Family Center prior to our receiving our nonprofit status will be tax deductible retroactively. Paying community membership fees (for which you receive certain benefits) is a way of donating to the school.

NURSERY NEWS

A Rainy Day in the Rose Nursery



Autumn is here! After a very warm beginning, Autumn greeted us with a week of rain. Well needed, but after the third day it becomes hard for the adult to remember that!

On Wednesday of that very rainy week we started our day in the Nursery by making our dried apples. For the first time we really needed our electric light. At snack time I turned off the light and right away one of the children commented: "It is so dark now!" This was not said as a criticism, but in recognition and astonishment. It is Autumn!

After our "dark" snack we bundled up in our rain gear and with courage went out into the cold and rainy weather. As the adult I was at first hesitant and worried about what we would do outside in the rain with-

out a shelter... Like me the children were a little hesitant going outside and huddled under their hoods showing me their cold fingers. We waded through the big mud puddle and just stood there for a while, and there it was again! The full realization that Autumn had arrived! The rain was coming down, the leaves were falling, the wind was blowing, and the light surrounding us was dim. It was beautiful!

All of a sudden the mood of the children changed from being hesitant and cold to an abundance of joy. We discovered all different kinds of mushrooms and how much fun it is to jump in the big puddles and make a splash! The children were laughing and singing, running and jumping. Once again I realized why we go outside in every kind of weather! If we adults are able to put our worries behind us, the children will show us how to enjoy each day outside.

The world is good even on a very rainy day!

-Jessica Khoshaba, Nursery



REMINDER:

If you are interested in participating in a group purchase of natural wool long underwear for snowy playground days (available for all ages), please contact Jennifer Ferrante at jenfer-rante@yahoo.com. You may view the selections at www.childrenswoolens.com. (A 15% discount is offered for a community able to place an order of \$1,000 or more and with the savings on postage, the discount is closer to 20% per person).



WISH LIST:

If anyone has any second hand furniture that they have been wanting to let go of or would like to sell, please contact Sandra Clements at (203)247-1297. Thank you.

Copy machine for school office.

GOOD NEWS!

On Wednesday, November 9, Apple Blossom anticipates giving a warm welcome to Maiko Canard, our Eurythmist. She comes to us following a two-month long performance with the Symphonic Eurythmy Tour 2005.

Maiko grew up in London and Tokyo. She performed and taught Hosenko Dance in Japan before coming to America, where she graduated from the School of Eurythmy in Spring Valley, NY. In 2003, she joined the Eurythmy Spring Valley Touring Ensemble and currently enjoys teaching eurythmy at Mountain Laurel Waldorf School (New Paltz, NY) and the Little Gnomes Day Care (Chestnut Ridge, NY).



Liane Bernard's CARROT CAKE.... 1 Cake Serves 8-12

Preheat Oven: 350 degrees... Prep time: 15-30 minutes. Prepare two 7-8" cake pans - brush lightly with butter or olive oil and dust sides with flour.

Cake:

2 cups all-purpose white or wheat flour
2 tsp baking powder
1½ tsp baking soda
1½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
¼ tsp salt
1 cup walnuts, chopped fine
¾ cup honey
6 Tbsp canola oil
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups carrots, grated
½ cup currants
¾ cup soy milk

Frosting:

2 8-oz packages of cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup butter (about 2/3 of a stick), softened
1 cup of confectioners sugar or 2 Tbsp maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla
1½ cups of walnuts for topping (optional)
1 cup of coconut for topping (optional)

Mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and walnuts. In a separate bowl, mix together remaining ingredients: honey, oil, eggs, vanilla, carrots, currants, & soy milk. Mix the dry and the wet mixtures together (do not over-mix). Fold in walnuts. Pour into prepared pans, bake for 35-40 minutes until done in center, test with a toothpick. Cool for at least 1 hour on wire racks. Prepare frosting while cake is baking. Cream all ingredients together. Refrigerate until ready to use. Frost cake with frosting - top with walnuts and coconut if desired.

Liane Bernard's HARVEST WHEAT-BERRY SALAD....

Serves 3-4

Prep time: 30 minutes

½ cup wheatberries
1½ cup vegetable broth
1 T extra-virgin olive oil
1 T walnut oil
3 T lemon juice (juice of 1 large lemon)
1 T apple cider vinegar
2 large scallions (white and light green parts), thinly sliced
1 large celery stalk, diced
1 crisp red-skinned apple, unpeeled and diced small
½ cup dried cranberries
½ cup walnuts, chopped
½ cup finely minced Italian parsley leaves
¼ cup pinenuts
½ cup red pepper, diced sml.
¼ cup jicama, diced small
¼ cup currants,
¼ cup honey (optional)
Other optional seasonings: mustard, cumin, nutmeg
Pinch ground cinnamon
Salt to taste

Combine wheat berries and broth in small saucepan and place over medium heat. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to very low. Cover and simmer for 35 minutes or until most of the water has been absorbed and the kernels are tender yet chewy. Drain excess water. In medium serving bowl, whisk both oils, lemon juice and vinegar. Add drained wheatberries. Add all remaining ingredients to bowl; toss to coat. Season with salt to taste. Refrigerate covered until ready to serve. Serve cool or at room temperature.

Deirdre McCann's PUMPKIN CRANBERRY BREAD

3 cups all purpose flour
1 Tbs plus 2 tsps pumpkin pie spice
2 tsps baking soda
1 ½ tsps salt
3 cups (or less) honey
15 oz. cooked & mashed pumpkin
4 large eggs
1 cup vegetable oil
½ cup orange juice or water
1 cup dried or fresh cranberries

Combine flour, spice, baking soda and salt in a bowl. Combine honey, pumpkin, eggs, oil, and oj in large mixer bowl. Beat until blended. Add pumpkin mixture to flour mixture, and stir until just moistened. Fold in cranberries. Spoon batter into 2 prepared 9"x5" loaf pans. Bake at 350 for 60-65 min. Cool in pan for 10 min. then transfer to wire rack to cool. Enjoy!



FAMILY TO FAMILY

This section of the newsletter is a place for families to share their perspectives

Lila's 1st Day of Preschool

by Joanna Simpson

Entering my daughter's pre-school on her first day of school was like entering a different world, or more accurately, bygone days. The little school room at the Apple Blossom pre-school, a Waldorf school, could have been a scene taken from the Little House on the Prairie set. The play area consisted of handmade cloth dolls with a basket of hand-sewn dresses and pants. The tables were formed of hand-hewn pine boards complete with bark. The stools were simple stumps. It was beautiful. As Lila edged her way into her classroom for the first time I was struck by the serenity. A handful of children milled about quietly playing, some flipping through the pages of books, others dressing the dolls. In my mind's eye I had visions of the other preschools I had visited along my journey to select the right school for my three year old: iridescent lighting, teachers raising their voices higher and louder to get the children to respond, kids whacking the air with toys, each trying to out shout the other.

There was none of that at Apple Blossom. Just children quietly playing with earth-colored, hand made toys. The teacher was wearing a long skirt (not the dress code) and wrapped on a full apron, as did the other kindergarten teacher. She was serenely walking around the room, making small interchanges with the children and singing. She handed my daughter a ball of deep red yarn from her apron pocket and my daughter presented it to me, telling me to polish the apple. I looked at it

thinking, "this is a ball of yarn." But to Lila, it was already an apple. The children were taking turns wedging the "apples" into a mini pine tree sitting on the table. When one little boy came in to get a special toy he wanted (a piece of wood), and hung around a little too long, she directed him out and back to his classroom with a sing-songy "off to your room, Jeffrey."

Upon entering the school, the teacher, Ms. Marquis said the school room was only for the children, so I sat down on the steps, filled with trepidation that my daughter would throw a tantrum should I try to leave. My daughter clung to me for a few minutes, so Ms. Marquis suggested I come down into the room. I rocked in a lovely wood rocking chair and held my nine month old son for a few minutes. Another teacher entered and commented, "Isn't it lovely to have your little brother here this morning." Every word was cheerful. A hallmark of the Waldorf method: creating a peaceful, nurturing environment for children and doing everything with joy; making all of our actions worth emulating.

After several minutes, my daughter tried to leave the room to get some "yummies" (her word for food) from the other classroom's cook area. She had seen them there during the orientation a few days before. Ms. Marquis just calmly explained that there were toys in that classroom and she should stay in the room, and she acquiesced quietly and contentedly. I couldn't believe it. No shouting. No tantrum.

There would be no tantrum. A few minutes later, Ms. Marquis said, "Okay, it's time for mommy to leave, say goodbye." Lila said goodbye and walked into the classroom, her safe sanctuary.



Lili

by Kenny Weinstein

*From zero to 1
Life began
My mommy and daddy
And we had a doorman
I cooed and I crawled
My hair it was long
I was birthed into earth
with my very own song*

*From one to two
I needed two shoes
So I could walk and explore
The New York City grooves
Old Japan and Laina Jane
Time in the playground
On Bleeker and 8th*

*From two to three
It was time to move
Dada, Room to grow
Cows that mooed
Swam in grandma's lake
And I started to paint
Sunsets, moon rises
Snow angels, pony manes*

*From three to four
Ran like a mouse
To North Salem Westchester
My very own house
Chippy and Squirrely and
Emma the tree
Ms. Marquis and The Rose
Garden
For my friends and me*

*From four to five
Time was flying
I became a big sister and
Couldn't stop smiling
Apple Blossom at day
My little Kai at night
A trip to Hawaii
Such a beautiful sight*

*So now I am 5
And I want to go swing
The flowers are in bloom.
It's warm. It's Spring.
And now what happens?
I do not know
It's just like an Apple Blossom
Puppet show.*

Apple Blossom Events and Announcements

APPLE BLOSSOM OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH FROM 10 AM - 12 NOON


Sat., Nov. 5. Apple Blossom Open House 10 am - 12 noon

Mon., Nov. 7. HVS visits Apple Blossom for "A Walk through Waldorf Grades 1-8." Come meet Marleen DeGrande who taught Housatonic Valley Waldorf School's graduating class of 2005 grades 1-8. She will walk us through the rich Waldorf curriculum that meets your child developmentally every step of the way. 7-9 pm.


Wed., Nov 9. Apple Blossom Bake Sale 12 noon;
Martinmas celebration 4:30 pm


Fri., Dec 2. Advent Garden. Early Childhood, 4:30 pm


Tues., Dec 6. St. Nicholas Day, in-school celebration.

 The Handworks Group has planned a school bake sale for **Wednesday, November 9** at noon. The proceeds will go toward refurbishing our upstairs community room, which will soon be used for parent meetings and workshops, including the Wednesday morning handworks gathering. Please look for the sign up sheet near the mailboxes and sign up by

Monday, Nov. 7 to bring one of your specialties or to volunteer at the table! Those outside our school will be invited.

 Just a reminder to all ... The Handworks Group has been using its regular meeting time to refurbish the community room. If you would like to lend a hand, please join us on Wednesdays after drop off to put the final touches on. Once the room is finished, those with smaller children can gather knowing their children will have a safe place to play - a home away from home.

 Aline Ricardo is very happy to let everyone know that our School Store has made \$710. 59 (including the \$200 from the HVS Fair) since the Grange Fair this summer! Thanks to Aline and Deb Curran for managing our sweet store.

 The Clover Hill School Initiative (currently a Parent/Toddler program) held a Fall Fair at their Stamford School site on Saturday, October 29th. They were happy to help promote Apple Blossom. We will be working to support each other in our efforts for outreach and Waldorf education.

Waldorf Community Events

Fri., Nov. 4. Felting Weekend at Sunbridge College. Friday 6:30 - 9 pm, Sat. 9 am - 1 pm, Sun. 9 am - 1 pm, \$180 including materials. Go to www.sunbridge.org for details.

Sat., Nov. 12. Holiday handcraft Fair, Rudolf Steiner School, Great Barrington, MA.

Sat., Nov. 19. Sunbridge College Magic Garden Puppets: Two Shows for Families, 2:30 pm (Ages 5 and up) and 3:30

pm (Ages 2 and up.) Go to www.sunbridge.org for details.

Sat., Dec. 3. Felting Gnomes and Crystal Caves for Puppetry & Play at Sunbridge College, \$60 including materials. Go to www.sunbridge.org for details.

Sat., Dec. 10. Open House at Housatonic Valley School

Sun., Dec. 11. Sunbridge College Holiday Festival; holiday music and eurythmy. Information: 845-426-3746.

Committee Update

The **Outreach and Enrollment Committee** will work to bring exposure to our developing School. We have decided to focus on four areas to execute our vision: Newsletter, Open Houses, Photos and Press Releases and Workshops. To begin, we are producing a seasonal Newsletter with contributions from families within our school community. We also plan to document the school year highlights and create a scrapbook, along with using key photographs for press releases in local papers. Open House days have been scheduled, and we will participate in Local Fairs. We will work with Workshops to reach out to the community and follow up with interested families who have contacted our school.

We have been busy at work. Our first Open House is planned for Nov 5th - - Please spread the word! We have

also successfully participated in both The Cannon Grange Fair and HVS Harvest Fair. Thanks to the many hands and hearts that make our school such a jewel.

- Tracy Castelli Tomas, Chair, Outreach and Enrollment

The **Fundraising Committee** will be releasing its strategy soon. Our objective is very simple. It is to have school fees cover the operating expense of the school and to use fundraising to cover capital expense and to put as little burden as possible on the teachers and you, the parents. Details to follow in the near future via mail. I can be reached at johnalison@gmail.com if anyone would like to share their thoughts.

- John Riordan, Chair, Fundraising Committee

