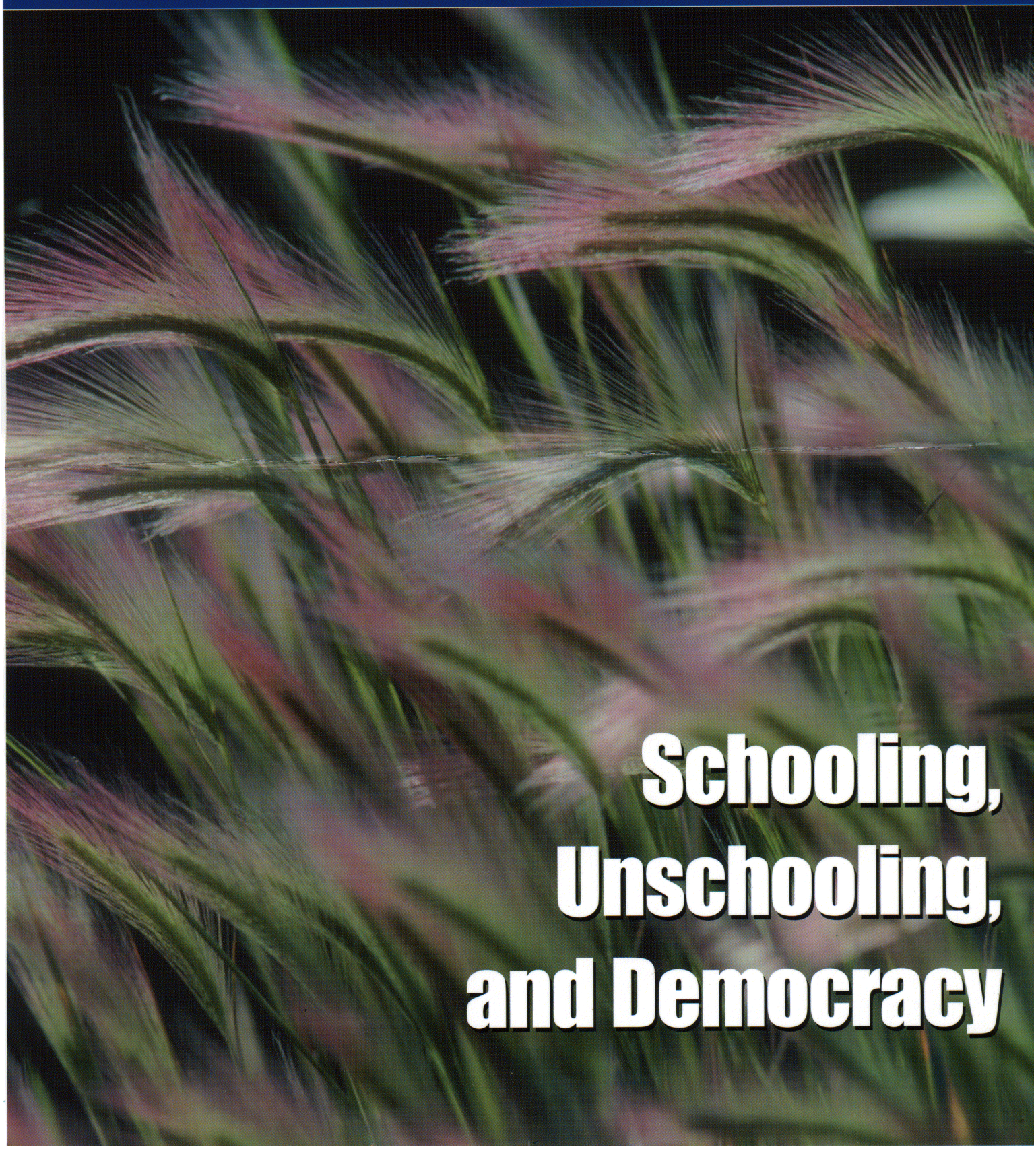
Paths of Learning

Options for Families & Communities



Schooling, Unschooling, and Democracy

Paths of Learning

Options for Families & Communities

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The Foundation for Educational Renewal, Inc., is a nonprofit organization set up in 1998 to publish *Paths of Learning* and promote alternative perspectives on teaching, learning, and human development. The Foundation is not affiliated with any institution, partisan interest group, or particular educational movement, but aims to stimulate dialogue and build bridges among diverse educators, parents, scholars, policymakers, and citizens who seek more democratic, holistic, student-centered forms of education. The founder and president is Ron Miller, a leading historian and commentator on alternative education. He can be contacted through *Paths Of Learning* at P.O. Box 328, Brandon, VT 05733, or by e-mail to <milleron@together.net>.

As stated in the Mission Statement for *Paths of Learning* (see http://www.great-ideas.org/pathmiss.htm), the purpose of this journal is to "encourage an understanding of education as a means of nourishing holistic personal development and a sustainable, democratic, and peaceful community life." To this end, we welcome manuscripts on any aspect of teaching, learning, and mindful living, written from diverse points of view and encompassing a wide range of educational choices.

Except in unusual cases, manuscripts should not exceed twelve pages. Submit three copies of the manuscript to the Editor of *Paths of Learning,* Richard Prystowsky (Irvine Valley College, 5500 Irvine Center Drive, Irvine, CA 92620). Manuscript should be double-spaced printed in 12 point type. Submissions should be aimed at intelligent readers who, though interested in, might be unfamiliar with the subject matter being discussed. We also ask that authors demonstrate respect for persons holding alternative points of view, even if the authors passionately disagree with these views.

You may also fax your submission to the journal at 909-549-0516. If you wish to e-mail your submission, with or without attachments, please send your work to the editor at <rjprys@ix.netcom.com>. If you want your printed copies returned to you, please be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Please include with your submission a brief autobiographical statement, as well as a short, descriptive summary of your article. If your article is accepted for publication, we will then ask that you send us a photo of yourself, as well as one or more photos that you would like for us to consider using in connection with your article. We will also ask that you send (by mail or e-mail attachment) a copy of the final accepted article after all revisions have been made and approved by the editor.

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste fiber with soy-based ink. *Paths of Learning: Options for Families and Communities* is the successor to *SKOLE: The Journal of Alternative Education,* which was founded in 1985 to serve the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools and published until early 1999 by Mary Leue of the Albany, NY, Free School.

Paths of Learning

Options for Families & Communities

Volume 1 Number 1 Spring 1999

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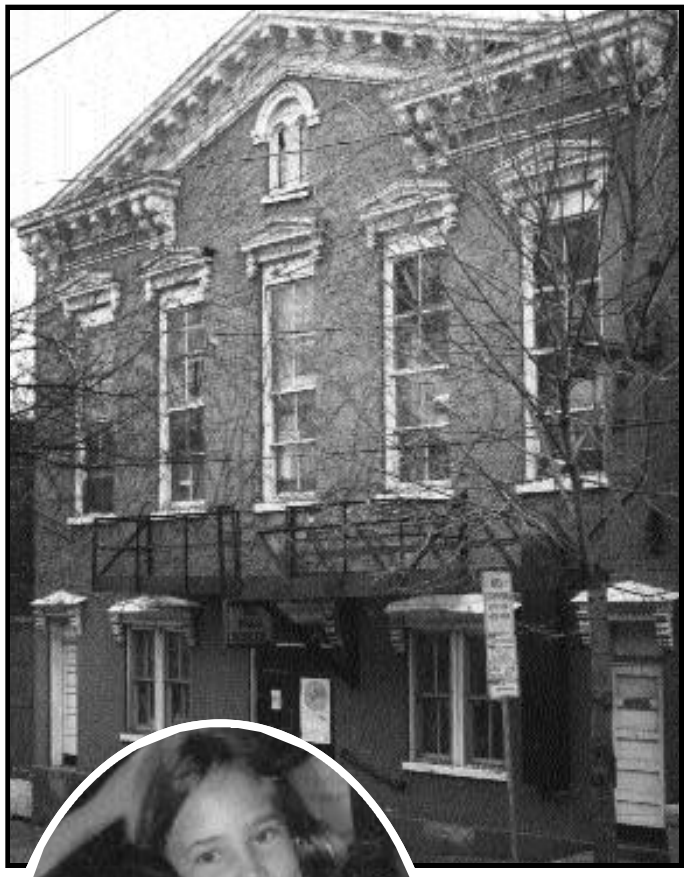
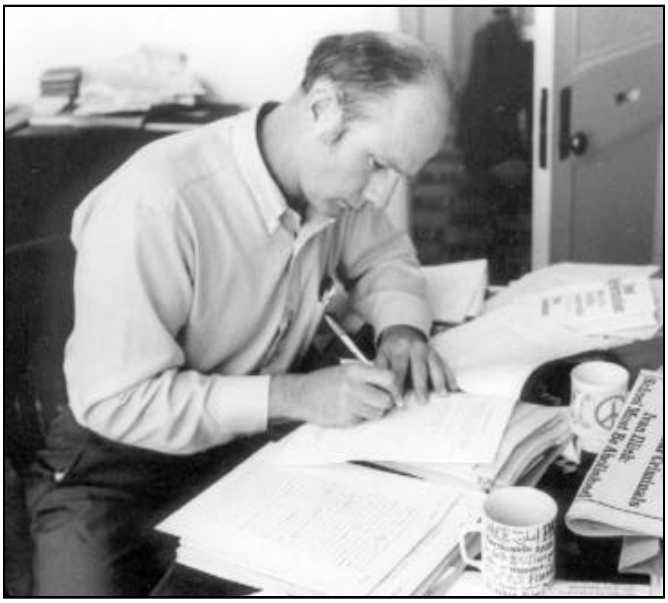
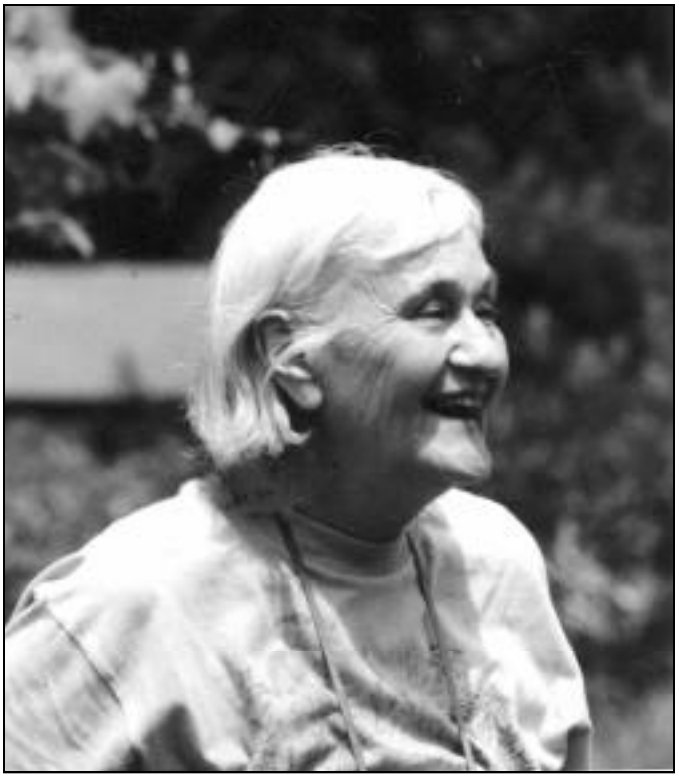






MISSION STATEMENT

Paths of Learning
Options for Families and Communities

The purpose of *Paths of Learning* is to encourage an understanding of education as a means of nourishing holistic personal development and a sustainable, democratic, and peaceful community life. *Paths of Learning* aims to inspire parents, educators, and others interested in educational policy and practice to consider diverse ways in which children and adults can gain meaningful, integrated knowledge and develop their own most authentic potentials. The magazine will promote educational approaches that embody the following qualities:

- respect for the integrity, wholeness, and autonomy of every person and for the needs of emotional and spiritual development
- understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of participatory democracy
- an atmosphere that fosters reflection, compassion, and self-understanding
- concern for the moral, social, and ecological challenges facing our culture as we enter the twenty-first century.

Paths of Learning will introduce readers to ideas, practices, programs, readings, and resources representing numerous educational approaches, both within and outside of existing educational models. Articles will discuss issues of educational theory and practice in a thoughtful, critical, yet accessible manner. The focus will be twofold—providing a rigorous critique of educational practices and institutions that diminish the possibilities of human development, and offering a wide range of alternatives that promise to contribute toward personal fulfillment within a fair, democratic, ecologically sustainable culture. Such alternatives may be found in many environments, from public and independent schools to wilderness experiences to private tutoring and home education, serving any stage of human development from early childhood through adulthood.

The magazine will accept various types of writings—essays, interviews, book reviews, journalistic accounts, historical studies, and accessible presentations of research or theory relevant to the editorial focus. Authors are encouraged to write passionately and from personal experience, while maintaining respect for persons who hold other perspectives. Writing should be clear, to the point, and supported by evidence or intelligent argument.

Paths of Living, Paths of Learning

Last spring, when Mary Leue — founder of the Albany Free School and the journals *SKOLE* and *Journal of Family Life* — mentioned to me that soon she would no longer be editing *SKOLE* and asked if I might be interested in helping to edit it, I never imagined that, within a year, I would be the Editor of *Paths of Learning, SKOLE's* newly incarnated version of its old, still emboldened, still visionary journal self. To this end, we at *Paths* are committed to carrying out *SKOLE's* task of giving voice to those who are practitioners in the field — the parents, kids, teachers, and community members who are doing the work. In addition, though, we are reaching out to an even wider audience, hoping to extend the dialogue to as many interested readers as possible, whether or not they are grass-roots practitioners and educational activists.

Thus, as we embrace those of you from the *SKOLE* family, we also invite into our community of readers anyone who has an interest in living mindfully; anyone who cares about the welfare of our children; anyone who desires to see all of us live together in peace, regardless of our differences; anyone who wants to rejoice in our similarities and celebrate our differences; anyone, finally, who is committed to having a meaningful dialogue on living and learning, a dialogue that is grounded in mutual respect and heartfelt good faith. Whether you are a professor or a janitor, a stay-at-home dad or a female CEO, a homeschooler or the principal of a public junior high school — if you desire to keep your heart and mind open to learning better and better ways for us all to live together peacefully in a world of joy and hope, then we welcome you into our *Paths of Learning* community.

As we launch this project, we thank everyone who has helped to bring it to fruition. We give special thanks to Mary Leue, whose courage and insight have helped to show us the way, and whose inexhaustible spirit has helped her to assist so many of us who struggle to live well (in the moral, Socratic sense of that phrase) and to produce meaningful work, for ourselves and others. Though *SKOLE* is no more, Mary remains connected with the *SKOLE* project, serving as Editor Emerita of *Paths of Learning*. More than that, her soul's signature, so apparent in *SKOLE*, lives on through that work and into our own.

If we at *Paths* are successful, we will not only keep alive the always evolving vision of a better world that Mary painted so well and so clearly in the pages of *SKOLE*, but also take Mary's vision even further. Thus, we reach out to you, our readers, in a gesture of respect and gratitude — respect for you as fellow advocates for strong families and healthy communities, and gratitude to you for giving us the chance to help you in your own good-faith endeavors to live and learn in meaningful, mindful ways. Ultimately, in our collective desire to help heal the world, in our mutual desire to help children grow freely and without fear, in our deep desire to help protect families and communities, in our sincere desire to create meaningful lives for everyone — ultimately, deep in our hearts and souls, all of us know that the means which we use to achieve our strongly desired ends are inseparable from the noble ends that we seek. And thus, the paths of learning are, at the same time, the paths *to* learning — which are, in turn, both the beginning and the end of the journey.

As you enter our pages, we invite you to trust yourselves to walk the paths that are right for you. And, in our collective endeavor, we ask that we all trust, honor, and validate the being, the presence, the lives of the children.

Welcome to the journey.

– Richard J. Prystowsky

Mary Leue: A Tribute

BY ELLEN BECKER, LARRY BECKER, TOM McPHEETERS,

AND CHRIS MERCOGLIANO

The authors are from Albany, New York, and are members of the Journal of Family Life *staff.*

Mary M. Leue has been a champion of children and a pioneer in education for over thirty years. Her longest running contribution has been the formation of a gem of an elementary school, called the Free School, located in the inner city of Albany, New York, and dedicated, as few other schools have been, to the authentic lives of children. Out of this little school sprang Mary's journalistic contribution to the educational movement in the United States, *SKOLE: The Journal of Alternative Education,* which has been in existence for almost 14 years.

In addition to publishing *SKOLE,* she has published a number of articles in national and international journals of education and psychotherapy, including the *Journal of Orgonomy, Energy and Character,* and *Holistic Education Review*. She is also the originator and co-founder of the *Journal of Family Life,* which she co-created in 1994.

But during her seventy-nine years, Mary, mother of five and grandmother of eleven, has been many other things: Maine farmer, registered nurse, teacher, civil rights and anti-war activist, lay midwife, leader in both the alternative education and the natural childbirth movements, therapist, community organizer, editor, writer, desktop publisher, and bookseller.

Born and raised in New England, Mary was graduated in 1940 with an A.B. in history from Bryn Mawr College. In 1943 she received her graduate nursing degree from The Children's Medical Center Hospital School of Nursing in Boston, Massachusetts. In the early 1950s she accompanied her husband, then a young professor of philosophy, to Denton, Texas, where she raised five children, taught school, and did graduate work in English literature and education at Texas Woman's University. Mary moved to Albany, New York, in the early 1960s and began training with several internationally known psychotherapists. In addition, she did graduate work in psychology at the State University of New York at Albany.

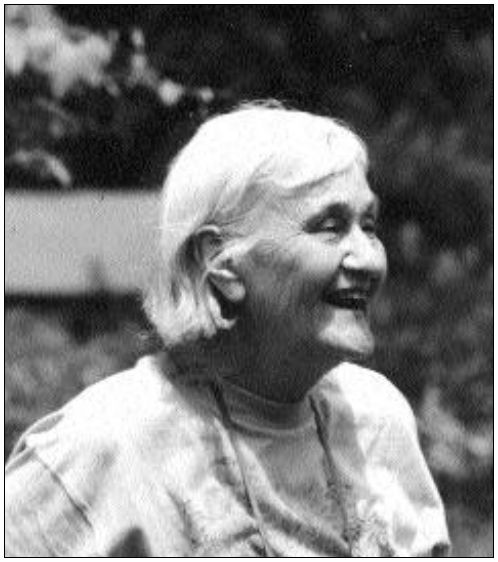
Mary decided to start the Free School in response to the distress of her ten-year-old son, who was suffering badly in the Albany public schools. Begun in 1969, the Free School is now one of the longest running, inner city, independent, alternative schools in the nation. Influenced by the father of anarchism, Prince Pyotr Kropotkin, by Mahatma Gandhi, and by Martin Luther King, Jr., Mary firmly believed that open, democratic education should be available to children of the poor, as well as to those of the middle and upper classes. When she consulted with A.S. Neill, founder of Summerhill, about such a possibility, his response was pure Neill, "I would think myself daft to try."

The Free School, named by Mary's son and the few neighborhood children who were its first students, began in her house and eventually moved to occupy a former Catholic grade school in downtown Albany. It grew in size to contain anywhere from forty to fifty students of elementary age. Mary attracted to her enterprise a number of college-age persons who began teaching in the school for free. These people continued to volunteer until the school could develop an economic base and could afford to pay them. They ended up settling in the neighborhood surrounding the school and forming the nucleus of an intentional community.

She and those young teachers began a group to foster the personal growth they each needed, in order to keep things clear at school, and to support the authentic lives of the children at school. That group met weekly for over 29 years. Other families came to the neighborhood, attracted by the school and the growing community. Guided by Wilhelm Reich's concept of "work democracy," Mary and the others

created a series of small-scale community institutions to both broaden the school's mission and support the health and growth of community members.

In 1976, Mary and other community members founded the Family Life Center (in a community rowhouse), a place that provided support for new families and parents. It has a parenting support group, and a support group for pregnant couples. The center attracts many new families and new students to the school, and the building also provides space for community meetings and gatherings.



The Free School, founded during a time when many other experimental schools were born and died, has survived; because it never relied on government funding. Mary created an independent economic base for the school by buying and renovating abandoned neighborhood buildings. Teachers and community members pitched in for old fashioned, "barn raising" type work parties to carry out the renovations. The buildings were later rented to teachers and other people connected with the school. In the process, many of us became proficient carpenters, roofers, masons and plumbers, learning self-sufficiency along with our newly acquired skills.

In 1983, Mary proposed what became known as the "Money Game," a community investment organization with the ability to give loans to community members and others. The Money Game has been the source not only of many personal loans, but also of funds for enterprises as diverse as housing for low income families, to the start-up of several new businesses. The community purchased Rainbow Camp, a former restaurant in the nearby Grafton foothills, as well as land near the Grafton Peace Pagoda. Both sites became important teaching locations for the school, and a source of spiritual renewal for community members and others.

During her years at the school, from its founding in 1969 until 1986—when she "retired" to create and edit *SKOLE*, and then later as an elder—Mary maintained that one of her roles in the community was to shake things up and to keep the school and its related enterprises from becoming formulaic or static institutions. As much as she enjoyed the creation of community enterprises, she valued community interactions more. The weekly growth group began as a teachers' support group, and became a place to keep the community on track and do personal work, and often the two were inseparable.

Although Mary originally formed *SKOLE* as a publication of The National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools [NCACS], not long after its founding she took the journal under her own wing. Drawing on her extensive relationships with the people working in alternative education, Mary has brought in contributions from all over the United States. Her contributors have included Jonathan Kozol, Herb Kohl, Nat Needle, John Taylor Gatto and many, many others. *SKOLE* has also published in-depth accounts of the history and daily workings of many alternative schools.

Then, in 1994, she originated the idea for, and helped to found, the *Journal of Family Life*, a quarterly publication for empowering families. And at the same time opened up the editorship of *SKOLE* to include her compatriots on the *Journal of Family Life* staff. For four years the two publications were sisterly quarterlies with joint subscription discounts. In addition to its quarterly issues, *SKOLE* was also anthologized in three volumes of a work entitled *Challenging the Giant: The Best of SKOLE*. Both *SKOLE* and *Challenging* have received rave reviews from a variety of people and periodicals. Perhaps a statement in *Home Education Magazine* best summarizes the thoughts and feelings of many of *SKOLE's* readers:

SKOLE *offers a quarterly exploration of challenging ideas in education. The articles, by leading movers and shakers in alternative education cir - cles, are always guaranteed to provide hours of thoughtful reading on children, teaching, learning and life. Personal essays, book and movie reviews, cartoons, poetry, and much more add additional flavor and spice to an always- enjoyable read!*

In 1999, Mary and *SKOLE* have undergone another transformation, which we anticipate will result in a much larger audience for *SKOLE* in its new form. Mary's work has been original, inspiring, and important. She always believed the most important way to deal with children's problems is to address the core issues, not just to treat the symptoms, and to do so at the earliest possible moment in the lives of the children or their mothers.

Her love for children, and her desire to enrich their well-being on all levels—emotional, spiritual, and physical—directed her along the course of her life, and forms the backbone of portions of much of her work. *SKOLE* is a prime example. It is a forum which recognizes the impact "schooling" has on children, and which helps its readers gain a deeper understanding of the fact that education, in all its various forms and possibilities, requires open and continuous examination, interchange of ideas and expression, celebration, and sometimes fierce criticism. Mary's *SKOLE* has established a solid foundation, tradition, and reputation; it's a hard and good act to follow.

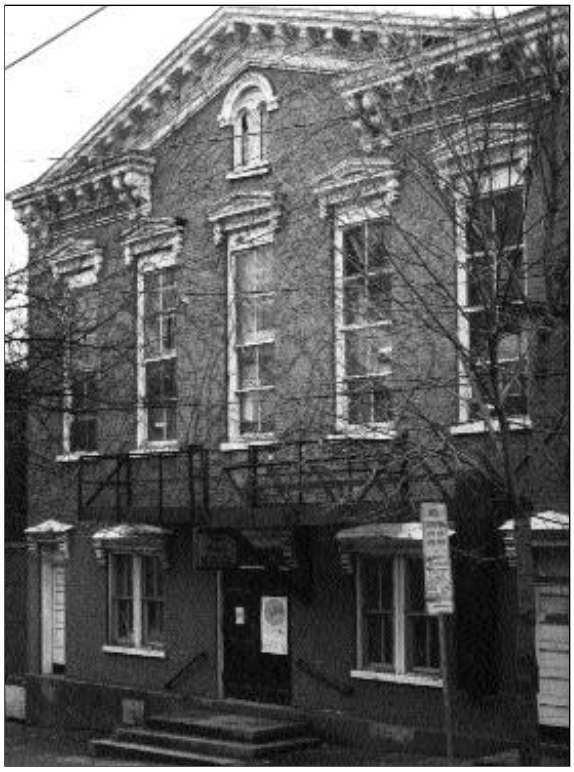
A Profile of the Albany Free School

BY CHRIS MERCOGLIANO

Chris Mercogliano has been a teacher at the Albany Free School since 1973 and its co-director since 1987. His book about the school, Making It Up as We Go: The Story of the Albany Free School *was published last spring by Heinemann. He is currently working on another book,* Rid-a-him, Or Why Are So Many Boys Labeled and Drugged in School.

The Free School is an intense place. It always has been — for many reasons. When Mary Leue founded the school in 1969, the nation was embroiled in an intense period of transition. It was the height of the counterculture's challenge to the status quo, and everything was being questioned: political and social institutions, gender and family roles, the distribution of power, wealth and status, basic human values, and authority of all kinds. From the start, Mary intended her fledgling school to actively involve children and their families in the struggle for racial, economic, educational, and environmental justice. She and the kids cleaned up the school's inner-city neighborhood and investigated pollution being dumped into the Hudson River by a local meat packing plant — this well in advance of the first Earth Day. They testified at statewide hearings on elementary and secondary education, held by the New York State Board of Regents.

The Free School is also intense because Mary is an intense person. Every small, independent school I have ever visited has a "personality" similar to its founder. It's no wonder really, since Mary lives every day totally, and she urges those around her to do the same. When her nine-year-old son finally declared that he wouldn't go back to school because it was cruel and stupid, she agreed to let him stay home, where together they invented a school of their own. Soon their school had four students, then the next year, a dozen, until it eventually reached its present-day maximum of fifty-plus. Local officials of every stripe quickly regretted their decision to challenge Mary's audacity. Almost single-handedly she won state approval, attained not-for-profit status, and purchased a permanent home for the school that miraculously passed the muster of local building, fire, and health inspectors. But the news media, sensing the threat of a school that was so radically unconventional, began calling for Albany's mayor (second only to Mayor Daley of Chicago as the longest tenured machine politician in America) to shut down the funky new school. So Mary and the kids made up signs and picketed City Hall, and before long Mayor Corning, who would later eclipse Daley's record by quite a number of years, became one of the Free School's staunchest defenders. Its troubles with the powers that be were history.



Mary is a person of passionate convictions who embodies a fierce dedication to the truth. She was careful to set up the school without the usual role definitions, so that there would be no artificial barriers between participants and their own personal truth. Kids were to have as large a share in decision making as they wanted, and teachers were to thrash out policy and personal issues in weekly staff meetings. Mary always faced conflicts head-on, believing that each one contained valuable life lessons.

The Free School is also intense because from the outset it included all comers. Mary purchased an old, semi-abandoned parochial school building in the ghetto, so that the school would be easily accessible to lower-class black, Hispanic and white children, kids without educational options. A sliding-scale tuition was established so that no one was turned away for financial reasons. As a result, the school quickly filled to capacity with the wildest imaginable mix. There were well-heeled sons and daughters of university professors and other progressively minded professionals, large families of Puerto Rican immigrants who spoke little or no English, dirt poor black children who only recently moved up from the rural South, hippie kids from the surrounding countryside, and everyone in between. Students came from the immediate neighborhood, from uptown, from the suburbs, and from neighboring towns and villages. Since the Free School was the only school like it for a hundred miles around, the only genuine alternative to conventional schooling, it attracted all sorts of refugees from other schools. Adamant that the Free School not be considered a school for problem children, Mary nonetheless accepted kids regardless of the size of their problems.

Add freedom to the equation and an intense environment is all but guaranteed. When, early in the game, Mary wrote A.S. Neill to ask him what he thought of her idea to include children of the underclass in her experiment, he responded as only he could, "I would consider myself daft to try."

Intensity aside, the Free School is nothing short of total chaos to most first-time observers. They are puzzled that children can learn in an environment so often overrun with motion, noise, and spontaneous excitement, and I shrug and nod understandingly. Then I usually call upon the Grand Central Station at rush hour analogy that Jerry Mintz (who in the mid-sixties started the Shaker Mountain School in Burlington, Vermont) likes to use to explain the "structure" of free schools. Jerry says that if the action in that immense rail terminal could be viewed from its high, vaulted ceiling, an inherent order would emerge in the teeming tangle of humanity that scurries through it every day. Everyone always manages to get where they're going, though sometimes there's a bit of doubt and confusion, or a missed turn or two along the way.

To Mary, who is now retired and living on her family farm in the beautiful Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts, the Free School is like a labyrinth, a place where teachers, students, and sometimes parents, can spiral into the depths of themselves. The school was never intended to be just for the children; it exists to support the growth of everyone involved. Mary talks about the importance for people of coming to terms with what she calls "the politics of experience," which the Free School seems to offer in abundance. The development of a personal style of self- assertion is viewed as an important learning task for everyone. The Free School quickly began to be noted for graduating children who displayed a self-confidence and a maturity beyond their years.

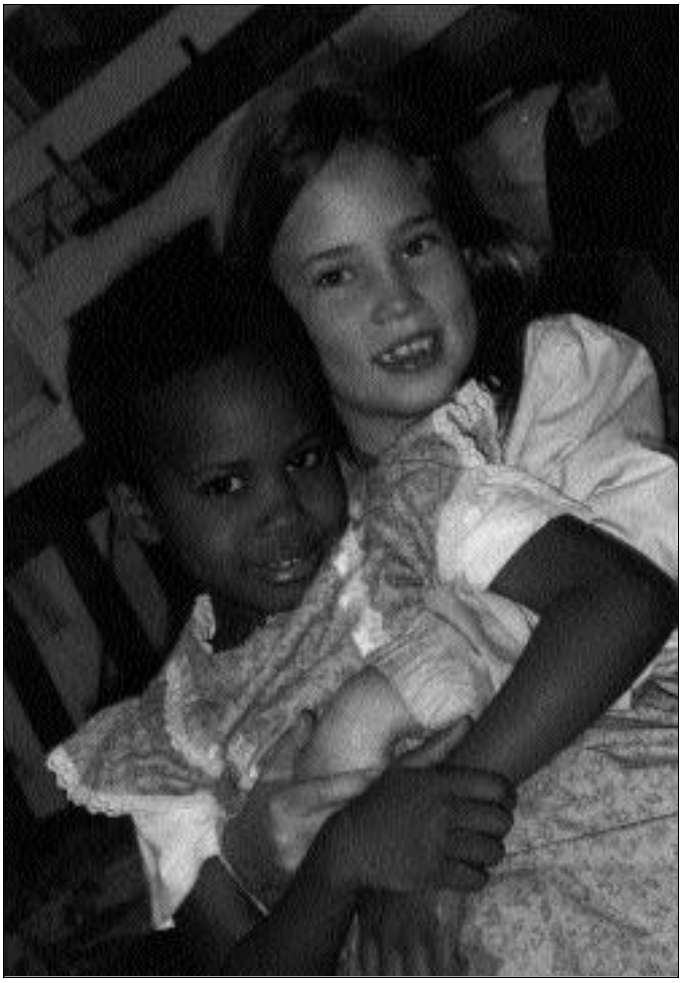
In the establishment of the Free School, Mary was deeply influenced by the work of the radical psychotherapist Wilhelm Reich. A.S. Neill had sought him out because Reich believed in

the vital importance of close observation of children's emotional lives; and the two men became fast friends. Reich discovered that the painful emotions stemming from early psychological trauma literally get frozen into the body's musculature, a phenomenon he termed "armoring." Inner healing is brought on by the expression and release of the stuck feelings. Here, the school adopted therapeutic techniques such as one that enables kids to rage it out when they are bursting with anger. The child is held, front to front, on an adult's lap and allowed to struggle, kick, and scream until the energy of his or her rage is spent. Very often tears of pain and grief have been trapped beneath the anger, and are allowed to pour forth. Many times over the years I have seen children's armoring dissolve right in my lap after I hold them in this way.

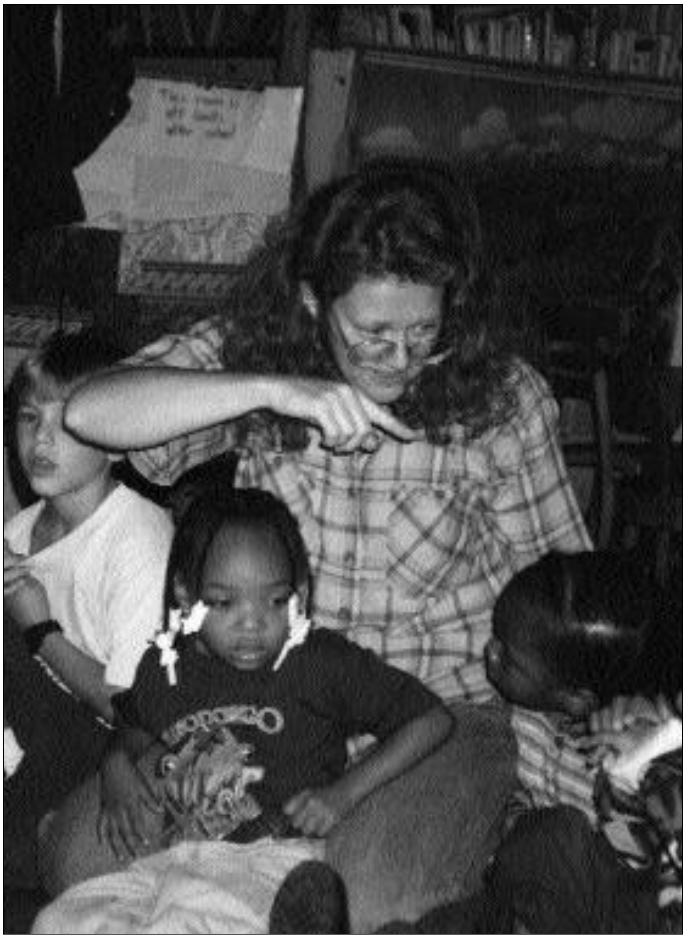
In like philosophy, a decision was made to allow fighting in the school. When two kids are determined to go at it physically, in order to work out their differences (if they aren't inflicting significant tissue damage on each other), they are permitted to proceed, with an adult nearby to ensure that no one gets hurt and to help the combatants reach a mutual sense of completion and reconciliation. It's amazing the lessons children receive from facing their own and others' aggression.

Such a high level of emotional freedom entails risk and requires safety. In order to provide everyone with sufficient protection, the school borrowed the "stop rule" from the Shaker Mountain School. It's very simple. Whenever someone is being treated in an unacceptable manner — teased, threatened, shoved around, or bullied — all he or she has to do is yell STOP in a loud, clear voice. If the offender doesn't stop immediately, then the next step is for the offended party to call a "council meeting."

The mechanics of a council meeting are as follows. Anyone can call a meeting at any time. By general agreement, but always subject to change (a six-year-old once got the mandatory attendance rule suspended temporarily), when a meeting is called we all drop what we are doing and come to the largest room on the first floor of the building, where we sit in a circle on the carpet. Three nominations are taken and a chairperson is elected. This is usually a student, and sometimes one as young as six. It is the chair's responsibility to recognize speakers, keep the discussion on track, and maintain order. Interestingly, while the atmosphere of the school is characteristically free-wheeling, strict decorum is required in council meetings at all times. This is seldom a problem because everyone tends to take the meetings very seriously.



The general rule of thumb is that meetings are to be called only for urgent matters, and only after other attempts to solve the problem have been unsuccessful. The chair begins by requesting a statement of the problem. If the matter is deemed by the group to be too trivial, then the meeting is usually adjourned. In a case of someone repeatedly "crying wolf," a motion might be passed prohibiting that individual from calling any more meetings for a prescribed length of time (an action



that sometimes sets off wonderful constitutional debates). All meetings are run according to Roberts' Rules of Order; and rules are made and changed, consequences meted out, and so on, by majority vote. When the issue is a particularly serious one, the discussion tends to continue until some sort of consensus is reached, although this is not required. A meeting generally concludes when the person who called it considers the problem solved and makes a motion to adjourn. Not every meeting has a happy ending, however; it sometimes takes several go-rounds before a genuine resolution is achieved.

The council meeting structure serves a number of important functions in the day-to-day life of the school. Most importantly, it keeps aggression from turning into a toxic force. Because even the smallest kids have power equal to or greater than the oldest and largest, via their strength in numbers, bullying and gangstering are easily controlled. Violations of the stop rule are always taken very seriously by the other kids. The therapeutic potential of council meetings is practically limitless. With kids' personal privacy and confidentiality respected at all times, meetings become a safe, supportive space where problems can be traced back as far as they need to be. Maybe it all started with something that happened a day or two before at school, or with some kind of trouble at home (an abusive older sibling, parents fighting, etc.). Tears are not infrequent.

As evinced by the Free School, there are three cardinal terms that have become entrenched in the vocabulary of contemporary alternative educationese: democracy, community, and leadership. Council meetings demand the daily practice of all three, on levels that are real to children and not just to high-minded commentators, school brochures, or grant-writers. Free School kids know that they have an equal voice, that they will be heard, and that they share in the responsibility for keeping the ship on course. The council meeting structure engenders an important sense of mutuality and interdependence. Everyone discovers on a daily basis how much they rely on each other for the protection of their rights, and for the support they need to reach their personal goals and dreams.

Perhaps the bottom line is that everyone in the school is empowered to care deeply about one another; and that includes the parents, cooks, interns, volunteers, and visitors. Herein lies the source of the school's existence as a genuine community—which is a state of being, not doing. In other words, the Free School is an intimate place, intensely so, where a great many life-long friendships are born. Love should be inserted at the front of the above list of educational principles. Mary would always say that when she found herself not loving a particular child, it was a sign that something was wrong. Happy children are inherently lovable, and when they act out in ways that invite disapproval, it is always a cry for help, for attention.

You've probably noticed that I haven't described a typical day at the Free School. There's a reason for this; there really isn't such a thing. Each day, we more or less make it up as we go along. There are a handful of organized classes for kids who like to learn in that style. The classes are optional, and students are neither graded nor ranked. If students want report cards in order to be like their friends or siblings in other schools, then we are not averse to creating them. It's important, we feel, not to become too orthodox about any issue, no matter how noble, including freedom.

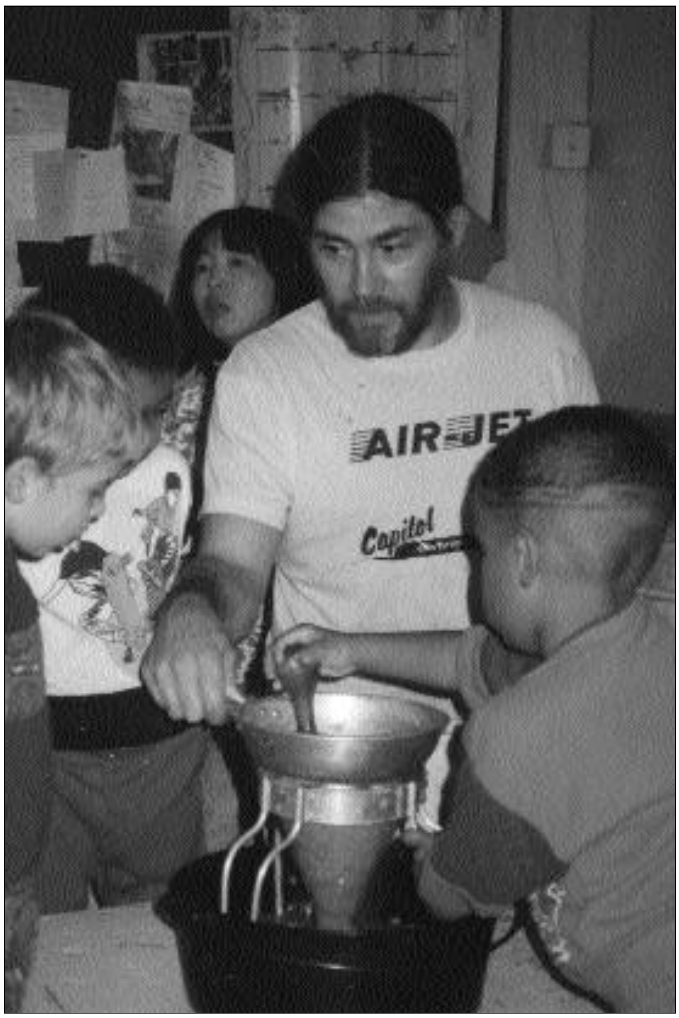
Food is an important ingredient of our community. The children are required to serve on a once- a-week crew that cleans up the lunch room after our excellent noon meals. This task takes only about fifteen minutes, when the kids cooperate with one another and work efficiently. Both breakfast and lunch are served every day, family-style, and kids are always welcome to help in the preparation, which they frequently do.

These days, when people ask about the school's structure or philosophy, I usually say the closest available model is what many homeschoolers call "unschooling." We place great faith in children's natural intelligence and their inborn desire to learn. Kids acquire their basic skills and gather knowledge about the world around them largely by following the thread of their own interests, just as they would if there were no such thing as "school." Though the majority of us in the building at any given time are biologically unrelated, the school is infused with a strong sense of family. The older students (we go up through the eighth grade) frequently become big "brothers" and "sisters" to the preschoolers (ages two through five), who occupy the second floor of the building. Teachers tend to love children as though they were their own, an exchange that is quite mutual.

Again, we have no curriculum, or if we do, it is highly individualized and flexible. We utilize the resources of the surrounding city whenever and wherever possible. Most of the older students, for instance, choose to undertake one or more apprenticeships or internships each year. They work with attorneys, vets, artists, actors, models, horse trainers, magicians, anthropologists, chefs, car mechanics, or pilots — the sky is literally the limit.

Anyone who likes kids and has an open heart is invited to come into school and share a skill or a good story. We usually have several young volunteers and interns at any given time. The walls of the school, in other words, are intentionally kept permeable.

Like all freedom-based schools, we value play, creativity, and the natural world very highly. Children play a lot here, and they learn a great deal from their play. The little ones upstairs dress up endlessly, creating magical worlds in which they structure their own play. We try to manage their activity as little as possible because we believe that children need to learn to tell their own stories. Given the chance to be in charge of their own lives, they will ask for guidance or assistance when they need it. Teachers try to resist the temptation to overdo it, and in any event, kids are always free to say, "No thanks."



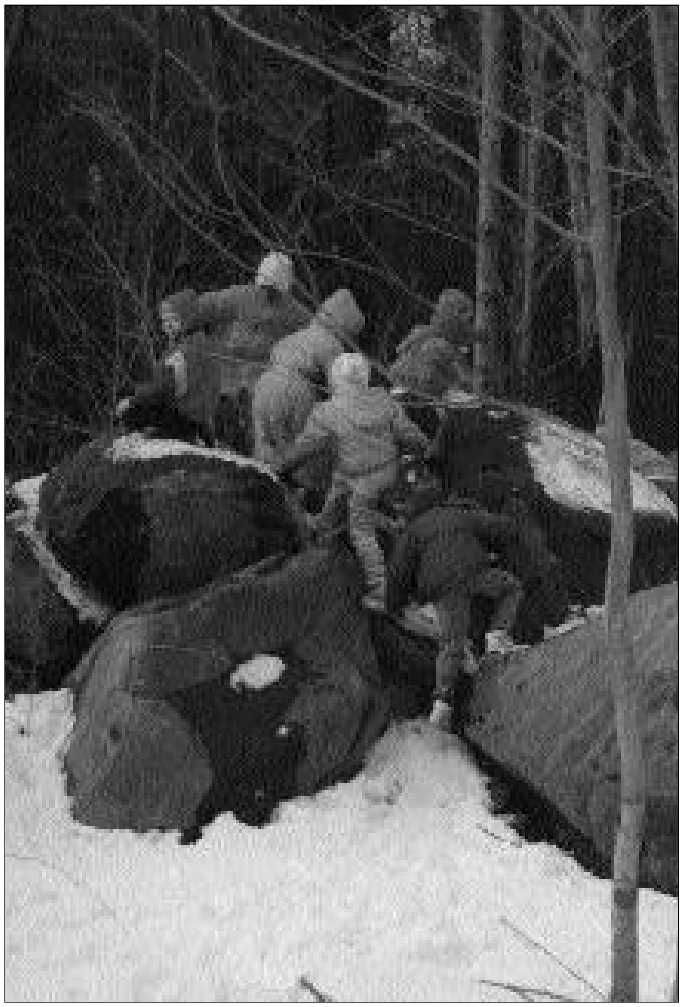
The art room and pottery studio, staffed by a half-time paid teacher and several volunteers, is almost always busy. In the preschool, the paints, crayons, markers, scissors, paper, and glue are in constant use. Kids also love theater and drama and from time to time put on their own marvelous productions and puppet shows. Sylvia Ashton Warner once wrote that if children's "creative vents" are kept open, their destructive ones will close. Our nearly thirty years of experience at the Free School have absolutely borne out Warner's observation.

The importance of the natural world in children's experience cannot be overstated. Every year the Free School sees its share of hiking, camping, caving, and mountain climbing trips. Our efforts in this area received a great boost ten years ago when the school was given 250 acres of semi-wilderness, located about twenty-five miles outside of town. We spend as much time as possible on the land, doing all the things one usually does in the forest, and we recently completed the construction of a low and high ropes course, which we are now in the process of learning how to use.

A note on finances: because nearly half of the kids come from low-income families, tuition covers only about a third of the school's shoestring budget. Grants are as scarce as hen's teeth, and we rarely try to obtain them anymore, unless we need one for a special project, such as the ropes course. Mary addressed this problem right in the beginning by following Jonathan Kozol's advice. The only way for a school to remain independent and inclusive, he said, is for it to develop some other means of earning income. When the college textbook and corner store ideas failed to pan out, Mary decided to start buying up some of the abandoned property that abundantly littered the residential block on which the school is located. Teachers and parents worked together to rehabilitate the buildings (a project that is ongoing), and today, in addition to housing teachers and Free School families, the buildings generate the rest of the needed funds. Salaries, however, remain low—$185.00 per week at present.

Over the years, in order to get by, Mary and the teachers developed a number of internal community support structures to keep living expenses down and prevent the money "from leaking out," as Mary puts it. For example, we started our own food co-op to supplement the food that we raise ourselves; we developed a kind of home-grown credit union that Mary named the "Money Game"; and we taught ourselves enough to provide each other with the majority of our own legal help and health care—both mental and physical.

On organization: the school is loosely broken down into approximately eight smaller groups, mostly based on age and maturity. Each group has a primary teacher to check in with, but generally these days it's one big free-for-all. Kids are free to migrate to where their passion is engaged, and teachers are free to share and teach only the things that excite them, an unschooling approach to education that the kids prefer. Mastery over things such as the multiplication tables and correct spelling sometimes comes later than they might in conventional school settings, but all of our graduates seem to do fine, if not excel, in high school and beyond. They never seem to stop loving to learn. Or is it learning to love?



Public Education, Alternative Schools, and Democracy

BY RON MILLER

Ron Miller has been an author, editor, and publisher in alternative education since 1988, when he founded the journal, Holistic Education Review. *Originally trained as a Montessori teacher, he is completing doctoral work on the cultural history of American education and is presently writing about the free school movement of the 1960s. He is the president of the board of the Bellwether School near Burlington, Vermont, and is founder and president of the Foundation for Educational Renewal, the publisher of* Paths of Learning.

The cultural turbulence of the 1960s and early 1970s sparked the beginning of a vibrant new movement for "alternative" education. A flurry of passionate and visionary books by A.S. Neill, John Holt, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, and other outspoken critics inspired thousands of people to think differently about the nature and purpose of education. By 1972 hundreds of "free schools" and experimental public school programs were founded, and within a few years more, the growing homeschooling movement offered another alternative to families. Public education, which had been revered by generations of Americans as a pillar of our democratic society, was now seen by many as a threat to democracy.

The roots of this disillusionment went deeper than 1960s protest movements, however. Although most Americans had supported the institution of public schooling, they have argued over its goals from the very beginning, and every generation has seen massive efforts to reform schools in some way. We have never been entirely satisfied with public education because different elements of society expect education to serve purposes that are in conflict with each other, and public schools have been weakened by the compromises that have been required.

There are as many possible educational agendas as there are economic, religious, ethnic, geographic, and philosophical factions in this complex and sprawling country. The primary problem for mass public education is that it cannot reconcile them all. One scholar, Sanford W. Reitman, showed how schools are helplessly buffeted back and forth between competing ideologies. Underlying these different agendas are three major purposes: (1) We want our schools to promote democracy, but (2) we also want them to support a competitive economic system, while (3) we also want them to inculcate moral values and civic virtues. In more organic societies, such as premodern or indigenous cultures, these realms of politics, economics, and morality are in substantial harmony, and a coherent education emerges quite naturally in the daily life of a community (as Native American educator Gregory Cajete has nicely described). But in modern industrial/scientific cultures, particularly the restless and rootless culture of the United States, there are deep seated tensions between these spheres, and to the extent that an educational approach embraces one of them, the others are diminished. People with different educational ideals struggle to establish one or another purpose above the others.

Let's look at these three purposes more closely, starting with education for democracy. The statesmen who founded the American republic two centuries ago all agreed that a nation ruled by its people, rather than by a monarch or an aristocracy, needed to educate its people to govern wisely. The most eloquent advocate of popular democracy and an education to support it was Thomas Jefferson. He envisioned a system of publicly funded schools available equally to all citizens, in which they

would learn to think reasonably and critically about the issues and concerns facing the community at large so that they could participate in its affairs. This view of education was a radical break from Jefferson's own experience; as the privileged son of a landowner, he received a classical education from private tutors while the vast majority of his contemporaries were expected to learn trades and leave governing to their betters.

Jefferson introduced a theory of democratic education that, while never fully practiced, has inspired generations of school reformers including Horace Mann and John Dewey. Democratic educators believe that the mission of public schooling is to alleviate the effects of social class; in a democratic society, *all* children, not only those from privileged backgrounds, should be educated to exercise their rights of citizenship. Today, democratic educators continue to struggle on behalf of populations chronically denied their rights and traditionally excluded from meaningful participation in the governing of society. One of the leading advocates of this position in recent years (and one of the most passionate voices of educational dissent since the 1960s) has been Jonathan Kozol, whose 1991 book S*avage Inequalities* poignantly documented how far we still are from the Jeffersonian ideal.

“Today, democratic educators continue to struggle on behalf of populations chronically denied their rights and traditionally excluded from meaningful participation in the governing of society.”

A major reason for this failure is that public education is also expected to serve a second purpose — the promotion of economic growth in a fundamentally competitive and hierarchical system of production. For all the virtues of free enterprise — personal freedom and responsibility, initiative, creativity, and so forth — there is no denying that fierce competition inevitably produces big winners (enormously wealthy families and exclusive communities, robber barons and corporate raiders) and demoralized losers (a disempowered working class and an impoverished underclass), and to a large extent the winners enjoy as much control over social policy as did the aristocracy in Jefferson's day. When we ask schools, as Bill Clinton explicitly did a few years back, to serve “one high standard: Are our children learning what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy?”, we are asking them to sabotage the goal of democratic education, because for every child who competes and wins, there are others who will compete and lose. No matter how well they do in school, few children can expect to become investment bankers or CEOs, because modern capitalist society requires far more technicians and service workers than high level professionals. Unfortunately, public schooling has been saddled with this purpose ever since state school systems were organized in the 1830s by Horace Mann and his colleagues. Although these distinguished gentlemen claimed to share Jefferson's democratic ideals, they were of the generation that developed large scale industrial capitalism (roads, canals, factories, railroads, and inventions of all kinds were emerging dramatically at this time), which Jefferson nervously anticipated as being hostile to the local, small scale democracy he advocated. Almost all the “common school” founders were political leaders in the Whig party, which represented the interests of the early industrialists, and they assured the factory owners that public schooling would produce a steady supply of able workers and contented citizens who would respect the values of free enterprise. For the last 165 years, the schools have been under constant pressure to deliver on this promise.

A third goal of public education has been moral and civic discipline. From the McGuffey Readers to William Bennett's crusade for virtue and religious conservatives' various campaigns, schooling has been seen as a powerful instrument for improving public morality — as this is defined by the nation's self-appointed moral guardians. Formal schooling in America has its roots in the tough Calvinist theology of the New England colonies, and even though Horace Mann represented a more liberal religious culture emerging in the nineteenth century, he still emphasized the vital need to maintain Protestant virtues; he was a stern moralist who believed that the state should enforce standards of private conduct (along with education he was actively involved in the temperance [alcohol prohibition] movement of his time). Like many Americans of his time, he was a Protestant “nativist” who saw the rise of Irish Catholic immigration as a threat to the established culture. Moral discipline thus became strongly linked to cultural uniformity — the Americanization of immigrants. The historical literature clearly shows that Catholics found early public schools to be hostile to their beliefs, and as a still small minority, they chose to build their own schools rather than fight the system (this was a significant early wave of educational dissent).

All of these purposes rest on a primary assumption that

modern society can be guided by some shared understanding of the common good, that we can find one model of education (what historian David Tyack, in a classic study, called the "one best system") that addresses the diverse and complex interests, values, and problems of our culture. Public schooling has traditionally been an effort to cast a unified ideological net over the whole of society in order to rein in its excesses and eccentricities (however these might be defined). We argue over which ideology is best for this purpose, but we have historically accepted the underlying assumption that some ideology needs to be instilled. Mann was an effective founder of public schools because he tried to include all three major ideologies in his model of education. As John Taylor Gatto has emphasized in his critique of public schooling, Mann and his colleagues borrowed from Prussia the idea that schooling could and should serve the interests of the state above all else.

However, there is a fourth understanding of the purpose of education, a dissident tradition that thoroughly opposes Mann's vision. This tradition argues that education is most fundamentally about nourishing *the quality of life* of the growing human being rather than placing young people in any ideological mold; it holds that no educational model should be established as public policy and thus imposed on all families and all children indiscriminately. Over the years, this minority tradition has been called "romantic," "progressive," "child-centered," "humanistic," and "holistic" education. It has been expressed by members of the Transcendentalist movement (Emerson and Alcott observed Mann's efforts close up and strongly disapproved), by working class anarchists, by spiritual seekers such as Quakers or the followers of the philosopher/mystic Rudolf Steiner, and by the radicals of the 1960s who could not stomach the hypocrisy and violence of the Cold War, Vietnam, and the increasing power of the corporate state. When we speak of "alternative" schools, we are usually referring to educational approaches in this tradition.

Most of the people in this tradition are deeply, passionately committed to democracy—indeed, to radical democracy. Like Jefferson, they hold that democratic society must be rooted in face-to- face human contact rather than in abstract ideological schemes, in small communities rather than bureaucratic entities. Nevertheless, they understand that the local, small scale community life of Jefferson's time has been usurped by the massive institutions of the state, the interests of corporate enterprise, and the distorting sensationalism of the mass media. Unlike liberal and progressive educators today who still adhere to Jefferson's and Dewey's idea that public schools should and can serve democratic values, most alternative educators do not trust massive school systems to teach democracy. They argue that young people can only practice democratic life when they are free from the controlling, hierarchical structures of public education. How all young people, regardless of gender, class, race, or ethnic background, would be guaranteed access to such learning outside a publicly funded system is a complicated problem that we have not yet solved, but those who seek alternatives strongly believe that the system as it is established does not work either; public schooling itself perpetuates "savage inequalities."

Alternative educators, in general, do not believe that economic growth or preparation for lucrative employment should be the central goals of education. On the contrary, many of them believe that the industrial economy's obsession with material wealth, consumption, competition, and global triumph does not serve truly human needs at all. Alternative education, for the most part, promotes values that have come to be called "ecologically sustainable" — values such as simplicity and modesty, cooperation and caring, local community rooted in a sense of place, equitable distribution of resources rather than competition for personal success. Such values are fundamentally opposed to the standardization and competitiveness that have so completely saturated public schooling in recent years. For alternative educators, learning is not a commodity and growing is not a race; rather, education is a journey toward meaning, wholeness, and community.

The followers of this dissident tradition do not believe that it is the state's business to impose moral and ethical values. As Stephen Arons has pointed out in his thoughtful critique of government schooling, *Short Route to Chaos*, the effort to impose moral consensus in a highly diverse and contentious society only results in greater conflict, mistrust, and potentially violence. Books are censored, academic freedom is compromised, and citizens argue angrily at school board meetings. Arons claims that because education is so intensely personal, touching the very core of our understanding of the world, our attitudes, feelings, values, and moral judgments, it must stand outside the sphere of state regulation and be protected as are other matters of conscience. There is room in our society, he says, for many paths of belief and faith. This is a major premise upon which alternative education is based. If we are to be a truly democratic society we must not control what people think; rather, we must try to encourage them to come to their beliefs and understanding of the world, and discuss their views with thoughtfulness and respect with people who think differently. This was Jefferson's intention, as well as Dewey's. But a standardized system of schooling, serving one dominant ideology, makes such dialogue impossible.

There are those who argue that education, especially public education, should simply be concerned with the academic "basics." If we get rid of all other agendas, they claim, and simply provide young people with the three r's and essential skills, then everyone can support public schools. The problem with this minimalist solution is that it ignores the multifaceted meaning of education. There is no knowledge, there are no intellectual "skills," so nicely isolated from questions of value, purpose, and meaning. All education takes place in a cultural context, and education in complex modern cultures must select from many choices what it stands for and what it does

not. Alternative educators recognize this fact, and virtually all forms of alternative education are efforts to make learning relevant and meaningful to young people's lives. These forms of learning arise from actual experience rather than from some "one best system," and they serve diverse paths of growth rather than one ideology.

As more people reject the values of consumerism and competition, and question the wisdom of a mammoth technocratic social order that commodifies and standardizes everything it touches, they are withdrawing from public education and seeking alternatives that reflect their values and respect their children's distinctive patterns of learning and growth. They are finding ways to reclaim Jefferson's democratic vision in a world he would barely recognize. This may mean replacing public schooling with some other system of education, or, at the very least, finding ways to provide diverse alternatives within the existing system.

Alternative schools include a wide range of learning approaches, from the carefully structured environments of Waldorf and Montessori schools to explicitly democratic schools in which young people determine their own curricula and participate meaningfully in school decisions. Groups of educators and parents have successfully formed charter schools where they can provide an education consistent with their values, yet receive public funding (with some strings attached, such as the demand for standardized testing). Some of the free schools begun thirty years ago are still in existence, and have been joined by new ones as small groups of families come together to provide intimate, nurturing communities for their children. Of course, the most intimate and nurturing learning environment is the family itself, and homeschooling continues to thrive and grow across the country. In all of these environments, the live, authentic interaction between child and adult is valued over arbitrary standards and the contents of textbooks. Learning is meaningful and relevant to young people, and they become deeply engaged in projects, inquiries and studies of things in the world that earn their interest. Education then becomes, as Dewey argued it should be, not a dulling preparation for some future life in the corporate economy, but life itself.

For Further Reading

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An Interview with Joseph Chilton Pearce

Editor's Note: Last February, Josette and Ba Luvmour, founders of EnCompass and authors of "Confluence: Synthesizing the Insights of Joseph Chilton Pearce and Natural Learning Rhythms" (published in this issue), co-presented seminars with renowned thinker and author Joseph Chilton Pearce. During their time with him, they and their apprentice, Kathy Dupler-King, interviewed Mr. Pearce on behalf of *Paths of Learning.* Asked to write an introduction to their interview, Josette and Ba gave us the following informative and creative response:

The Luvmours are educators, consultants, seminar leaders, advisors to public and private schools, and authors specializing in holistic education and family dynamics. They are co-founders and Directors of the EnCompass, the first integrated holistic learning center for the whole family. Their books include Natural Learning Rhythms, Towards Peace, Tiger by the Tail, and Rites of Passage: The Complete Individual and Family Guide. *With advanced degrees in developmental psychology, transpersonal psychology, and early childhood education, the Luvmours bring a unique blend of insight and experience to the educational environment.*

One had better be prepared when interviewing Joe Pearce. The breadth of his experience and research often leads to unimagined connections. In a flash, some of your most cherished beliefs are being challenged. One thing is for sure, though, as the following interview shows: development is saturated with wisdom; and wisdom is open-ended, constantly inviting us to know ourselves in our highest capacities.

In this introduction, we are supposed to write about Joe, who lives in the remote hills of Virginia and who has an electric bill averaging $12 per month (don't try to e-mail him); his books (*Magical Child*, *Evolution's End, A Crack in the Cosmic Egg*, and *Magical Child Matures*); and his accomplishments (for example, he lectures widely, having led many thousands of workshops). As has become evident though, during these five days that we have been living together while we co-present seminars, Joe would much rather that we use this magazine's space to talk about children and consciousness. So, we will make only one additional comment about Joe, this one of a personal nature: Joseph Chilton Pearce walks his talk. He has been unwaveringly gracious, and ever-open to new ideas. At one point, we were telling him how, on this trip alone, his work has so greatly influenced us. With a twinkle in his eye, he said, "Yes, I've been stealing from you, too."

PATHS: Joe, with your interest in the whole breadth of consciousness, why do you focus on children?

Joseph Chilton Pearce (JCP): If you want to understand a phenomenon in depth, you examine it from its unfolding, not just the final, surface appearance. Walt Whitman sums up our development by observing that

> There was a child went forth each day
> and the first object he looked upon,
> that object he became,
> and that object became part of him,
> For that hour, or day, or year
> or for encycling years.

We, the parents, are that first object, from birth, indeed from conception, on, and the child has no choice but to become who we are. We spend great effort trying to modify the behaviors of our children as they grow up, instead of modifying our own behaviors, which the child has no choice but to emulate. Since children are designed by nature to become who we are, we must become who we want them to be.

PATHS: What happens when we ignore the "objects" the child sees?

JCP: Nothing irritates a parent so much as seeing their shadow side, their hidden weaknesses or failings, cropping up in their own children.

We hold up verbal agendas and abstract prescriptions for ideal behavior in the child and then fault children for acting out our own patterns, mirroring those very tendencies and weaknesses that we know have caused us pain our failure in or own life.

PATHS: In our work, we've found that hurt parents make hurtful choices. The quickest way to heal ourselves and Earth is to redress the hurt in childhood. That means working with the whole family in a truly holistic way.

JCP: What attracted me to EnCompass is your focus on both model and child, and your emphasis on the reciprocal action that brings out in both of them our natural, ancient wisdom. I have written of the millions of years of genetic encoding for the success of the child's life and the ways we thwart this inherent wisdom. In the innate healthy relationship between model and child, whether the model is parent or teacher, this inner wisdom is both awakened in the child and reaffirmed in that adult, or even awakened equally in the adult if they themselves were deprived in their childhood.

Josette Luvmour, Joseph Chilton Pierce, and Ba Luvmour

PATHS: In *Evolution's End*, you mentioned such phenomena as the opening of intuition in the four-year-old, and loss of that capacity around age seven, unless developed. You had pointed out that, to develop any intelligence, an adult model of that intelligence or wisdom must be given the child to awaken that ability, and an ongoing nurturing environment provided to develop it to its full during that "window" of opportunity. You spoke at the end of that chapter of a certain sadness in recognizing that, through your own ignorance, you had failed to appropriately model for your first family of children as their talents and critical needs arose. What do you suggest for parents reflecting on their own shortcomings as models?

JCP: First, reject any feeling of guilt or shame for your failure, or you will simply further the difficulty. From early in my own life, I became aware of certain possibilities that I couldn't fully grasp, intuitive insights and experiences which I could not express well, since they were uncommon and unusual, and even when I did try to express them, I was ridiculed for such nonsense. When I had children myself, I could see the same general periodic opening of broad-level talents that I had no capacity to model, nurture, or bring out, since those capacities had been lost to me. Though I might try and encourage my young if they expressed intuitive glimpses, verbal affirmation wasn't enough. Those capacities weren't in the common domain, not in our lived atmosphere at home, and they either dissipate or remain shallow from lack of interaction.

The same goes with emotional nurturing. Many people complain that their parents didn't love them, not realizing that the parents couldn't give something they didn't have. We learn to love by first being loved. A true bonding at birth, as nature intends, awakens the most profound love in the parent for the child, regardless of the parent's own deficiencies. And this is a reciprocal awakening that continues on an ever broader level between parent and child, given the chance.

Bringing up my children after their mother died brought up memories of my own childhood and my sense of having been betrayed in various ways. And though I was determined not to hurt my children as I had been, later, after the harried crush of trying to play a dual father-mother role, I was aware of many ways in which I had indeed betrayed them, failed to meet their needs, imposed on them needless burdens, acted in stupid ways. I refuse to this day, however, to feel guilt over such hindsight. Guilt is akin to shame, which causes us to try and hide our failures, even to ourselves. Rather, I felt sincere contrition, or remorse, that I had been so blind. And to have a contrite heart is to be open to our failures, accept them without self-deception, be willing to learn and do better. I certainly refuse to accept this inflicting on our young what was inflicted on us as the "human condition"; however, the cycle can and must be broken. Most of my books about children have arisen from this contrition, this determination to do what I can to throw light on this ignorance that causes children pain and deforms their true growth. And the more I explored, the greater our potential was revealed to be, and the greater the travesty that we recreate the same vale of tears perpetuated

throughout history. Breaking that vicious cycle is the greatest challenge we humans face.

PATHS: So what happens when we allow this contrition to work through us?

JCP: To have a contrite heart is, again, the opposite of guilt or shame. Feeling ashamed of failure, we try to hide it, from ourselves and from our children. A lot of parental anger toward children comes from this sense of shame. Being contrite means opening fully to our own inadequacies, admitting our situation and the heartbreak we might bring on, and this stance, rather [than] exposing our weakness, opens us to healing. Hidden wounds fester. New patterns of action reveal themselves when we are hiding nothing. James Carse considers it critical that we let our children know of our own humanness, that we are not acting out some autocratic pose that we must defend. Admitting our vulnerability and capacity for mistakes, our children have no need to apologize for their own. At EnCompass, you speak of an initial stage of receptivity, followed by trial and error experimentation and exploration. This can only be fully undertaken if error is accepted without guilt, [an acceptance] which is a hallmark of play. For me, contrition as a parent led to my exploration of a whole new world — child development in all its ramifications.

PATHS: So, you would say [that] contrition led to vocation. Vocation means a calling. One hears that calling and is irredeemably married to that calling.

JCP: Admitting one's incapacity openly, a parent can then ask themselves, sincerely: What should be done? I found my own dharma or path of right action through that contrition. I had spent half my life in the wrong part of the academic world, for me — going in the wrong direction, you might say, which was hard work. When parents feel this remorse over their shortcomings, they should rejoice over the chance for decisive action, growth, expansion. Life eases up remarkably. A contrite heart frees one from the past and opens a future. Then one can become the model the children need. At EnCompass, you talk about this wisdom of the heart which opens to us as it does the child, in regular periodic stages. The parent [who is] aware of development's unfolding and the model factor, will grow with the child as [the latter] move[s] through [her or his] own stages.

PATHS: What is the relationship between contrition, neurocardiology, and the feedback loops between parent and child?

JCP: Years ago, Harvard University ran profiles on some 200 male medical students to determine whether as children they had a positive or negative experience with their parents. Recently, some forty-five years later, they ran health profiles on these same men. Twenty-five percent of those with positive childhoods had age-related diseases; eighty-nine percent of those with negative childhoods had health problems, cancers, heart trouble, and so on.

Linda Russek of Harvard and Gary Schwartz of Arizona University interviewed a large number of these men from both positive and negative groups. Before the interview, both the research person and person being interviewed were wired up for both EEG (for brain waves) and ECG (for heart frequencies.) They sat three feet apart, the distance at which the electro-magnetic field produced by the heart is quite powerful. Within a very short period, the EEG of those men with a positive childhood went into entrainment, or "sync," with the interviewer's ECG pattern, which indicated that these men's neural systems were susceptible to or able to perceive the emotional state of the other person. Those men with a negative childhood had a sharply decreased response in both time and clarity of entrainment, which indicates that these men, who had felt no support in early childhood, had lived out their life unable to respond to the emotional state of another, even when that state was warm, friendly, and receptive. If the heart is not nurtured by a nurturing heart in infancy and childhood, that heart response is compromised. And epidemic increases in heart trouble follow breakdown of parental nurturing, particularly failure to breastfeed.

"If the heart is not nurtured by a nurturing heart in infancy and childhood, that heart response is compromised."

Contrition can open that heart response even late in life, however, given the appropriate nurturing circumstances. "Hardness of heart" is a result of developmental deficiency; [it is] a disease, not a moral failure.

PATHS: If a person has been closed down in heart response in this manner, will the openness of another person allow synchronization to occur?

JCP: Research at the Institute of Heartmath, in Boulder Creek, California, showed that physical touch can lead to such synchrony between people. When one person touches another in benevolence, love, friendship, the other person's heart and brain waves indeed go into entrainment, or show marked similarities. Unfortunately, we are conditioned in our society to avoid touch. The touch-starved American child is near endemic, and the results are a mounting catastrophe, as both Ashley Montague and Mariana Caplan have researched and written about.

At EnCompass, you speak of the appropriate "developmental diet" for each stage, for natural, full growth of mind, body, spirit, and the critical need of touch for the "body-being" child of the first eight to ten years. The parent heeding what you say, and willing to respond to the child's needs, has at that point opened their own heart, for the heart's wisdom moves always for well-being. And you provide the parent with both the knowledge of those needs and the direct experience of such interaction.

This direct contact you encourage and help bring about can establish bonds that replace the usual blame and anger, or attempts to modify behavior, found in a lot of parent-child relations. This bonding action of the heart changes the parent as much as [it changes the] child, and the parent begins to be an appropriate model for the child's full development.

PATHS: Simple spiritual truth: put others first. Let the child be first in your mind and heart, and all follows. We have seen this many times at EnCompass.

JCP: The little child shall lead the parent into the parent's own awakening and growth.

PATHS: Blake's aphorism "[e]ternity is in love with the productions of time" is lifted to a new functional level.

JCP: Marshall Klaus, the enlightened obstetrician, for many years at Case Western Reserve University hospital, spoke of the bonding of mother and infant at birth as the establishment of the greatest love affair in the universe. Neuroscientist Paul MacLean researched the actual neural modules in the emotional brain that are awakened in the mother by interaction with her newborn. MacLean called these ancient knowings our "species survival" instincts. Once this wisdom is awakened in her by her contact with her infant, that mother knows exactly what to do for infant well-being, and is driven by a powerful energy, and actual instinctive compulsion, to nurture that infant at all cost. Strangely, she is herself nurtured by that nurturing, and rather comes into her own, her fullest stature, at that point.

PATHS: The wisdoms are there waiting to respond. This is why Ashley Montague insisted [that] women were naturally superior to men, with an intelligence which knows what to do to support life. You speak of the incomparable importance of this early bond and excoriate hospital births for their profoundly negative impact. Of course we agree, but [we] are concerned over the father's role in this bonding, not only at birth, but throughout life.

> "Mother is the wisdom of earth and beginnings; father is the wisdom of the journey beyond."

JCP: Ideally, the initial bond is between mother and father. Out of that strength arises the mother's freedom to respond fully and bond to her infant. Surely the mother-infant bond then takes precedence over all other bonds. Fathers aren't surrogate mothers except in emergencies. Mother means matrix; the words have the same root. We call this Mother Earth, not Father Earth, and for good reason. Mythologically, as Earth is mother, the Sun is father, who both supports and nourishes the Earth, and then by drawing from that nourishment, Earth brings the great cycles of life into play.

The father in a family supports the mother in her bonding with the infant-child. Father represents that which lies beyond the nest, beyond the matrix. He is first the buffer, then the bridge, between matrix and the larger world-out-there. To be that bridge, he must be an intimate, integral part of the bonding-nest from the beginning. But he isn't the nurturing one; he simply hasn't the glands for it. Mother is the wisdom of earth and beginnings; father is the wisdom of the journey beyond, into the larger world, leading the child toward maturity and its destiny, as mother nurtures and supports the child in the earlier phases of that journey.

To the extent [that] the child has a firm, unshakable matrix, knowing that he or she is unconditionally loved and accepted, that child is able to move from that matrix into the wider world when the time comes. The child carries that foundation with him or her, so to speak. Denied the matrix, denied the safe-space and nurturing, the child can never fully leave that stage and will spend his or her life seeking that safe-space wherever they are, instead of following his or her developmental destiny. The father will then be the antagonist, a threat to that longing for the safe-space not given. And if the father was so deprived in his own childhood, the two bankrupt firms will simply create further bankruptcy, leading to serious rifts. The early child is in what poet Blake spoke of as the state of innocence, child of the garden, nurtured and protected. The father represents the world of experience, the larger society, the adventure beyond the garden of innocence. If father has been an integral part of the bond from the beginning, the child will follow him with great excitement and interest into the wider world when the time comes. The word discipline comes from a word meaning follower, or joyful follower.

PATHS: In *Magical Child*, you spoke of the child of four to seven establishing a bond with the earth. Does the father lead to that bond with the earth?

JCP: The earth is an extension of the mother at that early stage. Surely the father can play a part in that larger bond, but just give the child some earth to bond to, a back yard, a garden, it doesn't have to be extensive, and that earth draws the child, pulls it into a bond. A four-or five-year-old needs long periods of doing nothing particularly, just being in that earth-space. They don't need to be led into it or [to] have it explained or regimented in time spent there. The earth itself speaks to the child, and they bond. This is no sentimental romanticism, but a vital part of development. Our breaking up of that bond, following breakdown of the mother-bond, is the roots of our current ecological and social disaster.

PATHS: Are there periods when leading forth is critical? Can one cross that bridge from matrix of mother to matrix of society without a father?

JCP: I wouldn't say that without a father no bridge can be built; that would be extreme. Any port in a storm is better than none. And a great deal depends on each child — how they respond; when they are ready to explore a wider matrix. If no father is around, certainly a mother could do the job, if she is herself mature and balanced, rooted firmly in herself and earth, and able to relate easily with society. But the natural balance of life a child rightfully expects is for a father to be there.

Society is but an extension of family. Breakdowns in family will be reflected in the society. And no legal machinery, no amount of law and law enforcement, can bring about the bonds on which society depend[s].

PATHS: In other words, father is an integral part of the matrix as [both] a love component and [a] part of the world of love in which the child flourishes. The mother-father bond is the primary unit, and the mother flourishes in this support.

JCP: Yes, the father's main job is to support the mother in the early years. He is the underpinnings, the support of the entire system, but he isn't the primary nurturing force. The most vital need of the child is a mother, and her need is to be free of anxiety, or concerns over survival itself, which is the father's responsibility. Nothing transfers to the infant-child so fast, and nothing is projected so powerfully onto earth and society later as the mother's own emotional state. There is no real distinction [between] the mother-father bond and [the] infant-mother bond. Bonding is the wisdom of the heart, not a head-trip. Father embraces mother, who embraces infant. Both embrace the child, who grows out of this primal bond.

PATHS: The point is that social relationships are natural, but will follow the same natural laws of bonding as the biological.

JCP: Indeed, and if denied the bond in the beginning, no successful bond with society can form. Society is but an extension of family. Breakdowns in family will be reflected in the society. And no legal machinery, no amount of law and law enforcement, can bring about the bonds on which society depend[s]. Those are formed in the home. Law or love has been our choice for the past two millennia, and, unfortunately, we have consistently chosen law and retribution over love and forgiveness and [have paid] a bitter price [for this choice].

PATHS: You say the father's role is to lead the child into the larger world and society. Is the safety to so enter the world given by the male?

JCP: By both parents, of course. As parents, we have to screen that world-at-large for that which is appropriate to our child's well-being and growth. We can't simply dump them into experience and assume that nature will take care of them, or [that] they will muddle through okay. We are that nature; it's our responsibility. A child can't determine what stimuli [are] appropriate, which experiences, beneficial. That is the parent's

responsibility, and a parent tuned into their child knows that child's needs and can "read" that child to see which stimuli [are] suitable and which detrimental. At EnCompass, you refer to the developmental diet and show that this diet must be monitored, on a graded scale all the way to maturity. Nurturing and protecting children means nurturing and protecting their native talents and capacities as well as [their bodies]. A parent bonded with their child allows their own wisdom to elicit, draw forth, the wisdom of the child in an interactive, cooperative adventure of the spirit.

PATHS: Any corruption of this is a corruption of your own Self. That is scary.

JCP: The betrayal of a child is the deepest betrayal of your Self. And our great model of some two millennia back said, "Better a millstone be tied around your neck and you be dumped in the sea than to betray one of these little ones." A dramatic but honest observation.

PATHS: You speak and write of an intelligence or wisdom of the heart and indicate that this is a matter of biology, not a poetic metaphor.

JCP: The new medical field of neuro-cardiology, which translates as the brain in the heart, is, next to "non-locality" of quantum physics, the most dramatic discovery of twentieth-century science. The research is taking place around the world and is being brought into a coherent new field of integrated knowledge through the institute of Heartmath, in Boulder Creek, California. Heartmath has been instrumental in lifting the wisdom and intelligence of the heart out of poetic metaphor into the biology of a hard science. The research is so counterintuitive to classic dogma, however, [that] it has not yet been fully assimilated, but is rapidly being recognized as critically important and revolutionary. HarperSanFrancisco is bringing out the book, *The Heartmath Solution,* in April of 1999.

I will try and summarize the research briefly, leaving out all the names and citations: An estimated 50 to 60% of the cells of the heart are neurons as found in the brain. These group in small ganglia, or miniature brains, complete with the usual components of glial cells, dendrites, axons, neurotransmitters, and so on. Half of these seem to connect with the various organs and parts of the body, the other half with the emotional-cognitive structures of the brain. An ongoing dialogue takes place between the emotional system and the heart through these unmediated neural connections. The heart responds to these emotional signals over a wide range, profoundly affecting functions of both brain and body.

The heart is also a major endocrine gland as well, producing hormones which also have precise and dramatic effects on neural action in the brain and body, action which changes according to the heart's response to emotional reports sent by our limbic-emotional brain to the heart. Watch your anger and frustration! We hold to negatives to our peril. The University of London's medical school claims [that] nearly all modern disease is a result of "sympathetic overload" from stress and anger, and production of the flight-fight hormone, cortisol, [which] this [sympathetic overload] brings about. Heartmath has a profoundly important training to counter this imbalance, [that is, to] prevent stress overload and the actual poisoning of the body through cortisol overload.

Most dramatic of all is the electro-magnetic energy generated by the heart, which produces two-and-a-half watts of electrical energy with each pulsation. This energy forms an electromagnetic field in the form of a torus, curving out from and back into the heart exactly as the magnetic lines surrounding the earth, which form a near-identical torus. The heart's torus of electro-magnetic energy extends from eight to twelve feet from the body. An accurate ECG, or electrocardiogram, can be made three feet away from the body, without physical contact, which is why Russek and Schwartz kept within that three-foot distance for the interviews with the Harvard graduates mentioned earlier.

This electro-magnetic spectrum broadcast by the heart covers a range of some 30 to 40 hertz at an amplitude 40 to 60% greater than the total output of our brain. In its coherent state, when receiving positive signals from the emotional brain, the heart's electro-magnetic spectrum is an orderly sequence of waves whose hertz value and amplitude can be easily read. These are radio waves, and the largest segment of the em frequency spectrum surrounding the earth is the radio band. As with the earth's em field, the heart's field is holographic, and the two can be seen as a nested hierarchy of shared frequency. All the information of the total field is inherent within any part of the torus, as with the earth's magnetic field.

Through all these connections, which lie outside our direct awareness, the heart maintains, as best it can, a balance within all body and brain functions, and in relationships between self and world. This is why, as Bruno Bettelheim claimed, you can't lie to children. They are picking up information from you which you are not aware of sending. If you are thinking one thing, but speaking or acting out something else, the child is aware simultaneously of all levels of that communication, and experiences ambiguity and confusion.

The natural wisdom of the heart has been seriously compromised by medical childbirth, [as well as the] breakdown in breast-feeding and general nurturing. The parent whose childhood reflects that background will pass that breakdown on without being aware of it, unless intervention takes place. And that is what EnCompass offers, and why the results of your work [are] so powerful. You actually bring about an awakening of ancient wisdoms in the parent, which they then discover in their child a win-win situation desperately needed in our day.

Confluence

Synthesizing the Insights of Joseph Chilton Pearce and Natural Learning Rhythms

BY BA AND JOSETTE LUVMOUR

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At the very heart of the matter, we, the authors of this article and the agents who have brought Natural Learning Rhythms (NLR) to light, enjoy a vibrant resonance with Joe Pearce and his work. That, perhaps, explains the instant connection all of us felt when we met two years ago as speakers at a homeschooling conference. Within hours we were personal friends, within months Joe came to EnCompass, our non-profit whole family learning center in the Sierra Foothills, to offer his insight and direction. Soon thereafter he joined EnCompass's Board of Directors. True to his nature, Joe then did three benefit workshops for EnCompass in the Bay Area. We co-presented with him, and furthered the dialogue of our respective life work.

In essence, everything done by Joe Pearce in brain-heart research and theory supports, sustains, and furthers Natural Learning Rhythms. And everything done in Natural Learning Rhythms confirms, validates and extends brain-heart research. There is a vivid excitement in this accord, a quickening, available to every reasonable educator, parent, and student of human nature. The subject matter upon which our collective research, fieldwork, and nitty-gritty experience converges is nothing less than the wisdom/intelligence guiding human development and the awakening of authentic human potential.

At first reading, *Magical Child* seemed to us a good book, but nothing special. It seemed obvious that there is an extraordinary intelligence that guides human development and that this intelligence expresses itself biologically. We had direct experience of that intelligence daily in our work with preschoolers and with the children in our community. Our meditation work had shown us the power and grace of the human mind and taught us respect for the nervous system which receives, decodes, and transmits the vital information that awakens meaning and purpose in life. We appreciated the specific descriptions of the biological dynamics that provide the foundation for this sacred process, which Pearce delineated and resoundingly endorsed, in his views on the horrifying traumas of hospital childbirth and the crippling pejorative that is public school. And so we put down the book glad that someone had spoken out so eloquently on the crucial issue of children and education.

However, we had missed the subtlety of his message. Only after extensive dialogue with colleagues and members of our community did we come to appreciate the scope of *Magical Child.* For Pearce's point, as his subsequent books refine and elucidate, is that honoring biological development awakens the spiritual potential of the child. In NLR, we refer to "the pattern that connects," a phrase coined by Gregory Bateson, the great holistic anthropologist. Underlying phenomena is an unseen pattern that contains the laws and principles that determine their nature and Nature itself. *Magical Child* suggested that this pattern could be clearly discerned in child development. The implication was that an environment that provided attunement to this pattern allowed the child nothing less than profound spiritual awareness, within the limits of the developmental moment.

As we contemplated these subtleties, the

overarching importance of the guiding intelligence of each developmental stage became apparent. Joe had used the term "stage-specific wisdom." Our interpretation, since born out in countless hours of fieldwork and research, was that the wisdom "contained" all the child needed to access health and wholeness. This included the knowledge of how to live in the everyday world, again within developmental capabilities. What, then, we asked ourselves, is the exact nature of this alive, vital intelligence that guides the extraordinary unfolding that allows for awakening, for fulfillment of the human potential?

We searched Joe's work and came away with a profound respect for the elegant, intrinsic biological expression of stage-specific wisdom. But beyond that, Pearce turned to parapsychological phenomena to justify his conclusions about the spiritual dimensions of stage- specific wisdom. This left us unsatisfied, for our work with children had already revealed a deeper motivation "hidden" in their ordinary actions and activities. Further, our inner work described an inherent wisdom made explicit in all human interactions. It is not necessary to have teens bend spoons to know of their tremendous reservoir of personal power. Uncluttered observation of their lives reveals this power instantly and unmistakably. But why so much power, and why then? Certainly, not just to bend spoons. It was this mystery to which we turned our attention in the fall of 1979. We have been steadily unraveling it ever since. Not surprisingly, Joe has too.

Other great educators have noticed that an unseen inner wisdom guides the developmental process. Rudolf Steiner, originator of the spiritual discipline Anthroposophy and guiding light of Waldorf education called it imagination. Ken Wilber, recognizing how Eastern philosophies have always cherished wholeness, used the Sanskrit term *Atman.* Maria Montessori, one of the great observers of children and founder of Montessori education, preferred *horme,* a Greek word indicating purpose and meaning within all acts. Perhaps one of the most pure formulations is that of *adequatio*, which simply means that an inner capacity must be present before understanding can occur. Thomas Merton, the great Christian contemplative, referred to it simply as "the hidden wholeness."

This is indeed a powerful pantheon. Yet great gaps in their paradigms appear upon close examination. Steiner's explication of this wisdom resorts to the esoteric. Children are, for instance, developing "astral bodies" at certain moments of their growth. They therefore should have specific colors on classroom walls, or certain types of curriculum. This may be true, though we cannot be sure what is meant by "astral body." Nor can it be verified through simple observation and reasoning. Also, wisdom has great breadth. To limit it to such arcane realms denies the force and meaning of its expression in everyday life. Wilber, one of the best articulators of the importance of understanding child development for a real appreciation of consciousness, sees children as born with some sort of original sin and incapable of meaningful spiritual insight until they are adults. Montessori described the way in which horme expresses itself in the first seven years of life in exquisite detail, but she never said why it is that way, nor how it exemplified and supported the child's wisdom. Pearce, as we said, looks to the paranormal for "proof" of stage-specific wisdom. Merton never gave any specific information at all.

Perhaps what bothered us the most was the lack of easily accessible information for parents and teachers. They are the people who have the greatest influence on the children, but most people do not experience their children as "magical." They are less concerned with magic than with understanding their family's daily interactions. Montessori wrote for teachers of her method, believing fully in training a cadre of devotees who would then disseminate the information. Waldorf education has followed the same route. Most developmental research is done in universities and bound in academia.

So the gap has these two dimensions: a lack of easily digestible information and a lack of specific information on the qualities, meaning, and purpose of stage-specific wisdom. Why do certain capacities appear at certain times? How is that wise? In other words, how does it serve the awakening wholeness that is the child? There is an intermediary step in which the "hidden wholeness" is transformed into development. It is within stage-specific wisdom that this transformation occurs. In the fullness of child development we can discern that wisdom, describe its attributes and needs, and thus allow the child direct conscious contact, within the capacities of the developmental stage, with her own inherent wisdom. Furthermore, this can be stated so that parents and teachers can "get it" and use it.

Confluence: The joining of two dynamic fluid systems

Whereas Joseph Chilton Pearce continued his investigation through biology and through his fine appreciation of the human psyche and consciousness, our approach centered primarily on fieldwork. We carefully cultivated a way of being with children in a natural, easygoing way in all the events of their lives. We didn't track behavior quantitatively as behavioral psychologists do. Rather, we observed, listened, and interacted to try to discern what were the motivations for the behavior. Without prejudice, for we had no idea what we would find, we allowed the whole of our skill and understanding to connect with the whole of the child. Through countless hours of

inquiry into our observations, into our research, and into one another, the light dawned. We could see and describe much about stage-specific wisdom. More importantly, we could reasonably state why certain capacities appeared when they did and how they served the wholeness of the child inclusive of the physical and the spiritual. We then field tested our insights for years, modifying our understanding according to its data and our ongoing studies in psychology, anthropology, the physical sciences, and all related disciplines.

This led us far afield. It is the human psyche that is being investigated and any cogent comment about it must be consistent with all these diverse disciplines. Furthermore, since child development is an example of the pattern that connects, all that can be known of the pattern itself is relevant. At this point we seemed to have parted company with Pearce. He spoke of his meditation teachers, Eastern spirituality, and the extraordinary, always with a judicious eye on biology. We looked at motivation, meaning, and context. He chronicled the disastrous biological consequences of the destruction of the mother-child bond during hospital births. We examined why this bond was so important — what aspect of self depended on this bond. He did academic research. We did fieldwork. He did intense inner work. But, ah, so did we. And in the end we have arrived at a great confluence of understanding and awe at the elegant precision inherent in human development and life. By stitching together our respective insights, we find that a whole emerges that stretches from biology to spirituality and includes evolution and psychology. We know we speak for Joe when we beseech anyone concerned with children, which all of us must be, to attempt to understand and implement these insights. They may well be the spring that propels us away from conditioning and into the true freedom of our humanity.

We can now turn our attention to the specifics of that understanding as seen from each of our perspectives. Consider the effects of a five-year-old watching television for two hours a day. Pearce goes into great detail about the disastrous physiological effects on the child's nervous system. He makes a compelling logical and scientific argument that leaves no doubt that television poisons the child. Dysfunctional behaviors, which may include listlessness, hyperactivity or depression, follow. Then he goes the next step and tells us what the child is missing while her nervous system tries to digest and/or recuperate from the television experience. This five-year-old has just gone through a brain growth spurt which yields increased potential in auditory and visual perception. Pearce, drawing on his mystical experience, points out that there is a pure vibration at the essence of both sound and vision. To know this sound is to know something of the essence, of spirit. While acknowledging that the developmental moment when this vibration can be directly experienced is probably not until at least the late teens, Pearce unequivocally believes that the disruption caused by television severely inhibits, if not destroys, the later possibility. He cites a biological developmental truth that windows of learning have specific moments of opportunity. Miss the window and it is very hard, if not impossible, to access the learning.

Pearce goes further. Based on anecdotes, and his own experience, he says that children of this age develop intuition. They can accurately "read" the unspoken and unseen issues important to those close to them and respond in a way that lends clarity and insight. Intuition, Pearce believes, is also undermined by television. Thus, there is great unnecessary suffering for the child. She incurs damage to her nervous system, gets caught in a vicious ring of dysfunctional behaviors, cannot access her human potential of intuition, and undermines her future opportunity for direct spiritual experience. The costs for this, as Pearce observes, are beyond all reckoning for self, family, community, and species.

In 1985, long before Jane Healy synthesized the scientific research in her excellent book *Endangered Minds*, Natural Learning Rhythms (NLR) predicted that television hurts young children. Based on careful fieldwork and research, NLR simply states that, in the first principal developmental stage, called BodyBeing, children receive and transmit information predominantly through sensation. Many have noted this; Montessori is especially articulate about sensation. NLR examines the value of a sensation-based wisdom for the young child. In the behavior of the child, for example, who is curious and explorative, NLR notes the necessity of the moment, in that the child must make her body work in her environment in order to survive. Additionally, children who have a nourishing sensation environment experience the psychological fact of belongingness.

This is a cornucopia of information. The first question to be answered is what is a nurturing sensation environment. NLR speaks of "foods" that nurture the developmental wisdom. It carefully defines its terms. For BodyBeing, the most important food is loving touch. The secondary foods are security, warmth, nourishment, and flexibility. (Unfortunately, space does not permit us to go into detail concerning these concepts, which are covered at length in our book, *Natural Learning Rhythms.*) When these foods are provided in the proper balance for the individual child, the exploration necessary for environmental-body learning occurs. She experiences a vibrant personal strength. She also activates a sophisticated ability to make sensation-based maps of her world. This world includes, of course, both the sensations and the emotions of those around her. Daniel Stern, in *Diary of a Baby*, has an excellent phenomenological discussion of this mapmaking ability.

Personal strength, creating sensation-based maps, and the need to explore serve belongingness, the primary wisdom of this stage. To belong in one's body, in the family, as part of the environment is the unimpeachable foundation that allows full expression of the human potential of BodyBeing. Once it is understood that the primary wisdom of BodyBeing is belongingness and that the secondary wisdoms are personal strength and the ability to create boundaries, then every action and

behavior of the child can be understood. For instance, if the child truly belongs, then she is in an intimate sensation relationship with her family. She knows their sensation rhythms as easily as she sees the color red. That relationship is fertile ground for exploration that she willingly engages. As she grows, and certainly by the age of five, she knows the boundaries within which life is safe and secure for herself *and* her world. Pearce's concept of intuition, then, points to a natural occurrence.

Natural Learning Rhythms allows us to feel through a child's heart and see through a child's eyes. From the child's perspective, there is nothing remarkable about intuition. It is as obvious to her as is the sensation of a hot stove. In actuality, from the BodyBeing child's perspective, all actions arise either from belongingness or from a movement towards it. *This wisdom is spirituality itself for the child.* While she has no words for it, she knows whether it is being nurtured or violated. All so-called dysfunctional behaviors are nothing other than the child clamoring to get back in tune with her developmental wisdom. Restoring health, then, is mostly a matter of providing the developmental foods in a form that can be assimilated by the child. Additional remedies can be offered that are in accord with developmental needs. NLR never resorts to rewards and punishments for that emphasizes the behaviors at the expense of the wisdom.

"From the BodyBeing child's perspective, all actions arise either from belongingness or from a movement towards it."

There is obviously much more that can be said about BodyBeing. As our discussion is about television, it is important to note that in this developmental stage the child's body tells her truth. Her body and especially her face, but not her words, are the clearest indicators of her current state of health. Now, simply observe a five-year-old watching TV. Also, keep in mind the foods of loving touch and nourishment. Remember that the child processes information according to its sensation content. To predict that it is poison is, well, child's play. And playing is what children should be doing, not watching TV.

There are many such correspondences between Pearce's work and ours. They so vividly enhance one another. For example, there is the way each of us views the awareness of personal mortality, which occurs at nine, as well as the intense social activity of the years nine to twelve. A great change in brain physiology happens around eleven, and we each have unique ways of exploring its spiritual dimensions. Joe's work and NLR meticulously chronicle the precise way that development leads to mature reasoning and then how, in the late teens (Joe) and early twenties (NLR), reason can be astutely used to go beyond itself into the transpersonal (spiritual) qualities of the psyche. We invite the reader to read all his books, especially *Evolution's End*, since it is in this book that his understanding of spirituality is most clearly articulated. Our books and website are noted in the author biographies that appear with this and the following articles and, for your convenience, a summary of basic NLR principles can be found in the table that accompanies this article.

It will lend clarity to examine one more comparison of the two approaches. As mentioned, Pearce believes that there is a great opportunity for refined spiritual/mystical experiences in the late teens. As always, he links the opportunities and capacities of the child to biology, and specifically to brain research. In this case, he claims that the evidence suggests there should be increased neuronal activity in the frontal lobes. If this occurred it would be nothing less than the biological basis for spiritual awakening. That it doesn't, he feels, is due to two main factors. The first, improper nurturing of the developing brain, has already been indicated in the discussion about television. The second is "Pearce's law": No natural potential will ever be manifest without a live model to stimulate its appearance. Since so few humans live in their true potential, our teens have no model that calls forth the activation of this highest brain. Pearce believes that this brain connects to the most profound human heart wisdom. In his recent work he cites growing physiological evidence to support the heart-brain connection. His greatest sadness is that this potential is not active in most humans. We do not know our own hearts.

Pearce observes a "great longing" in the late teens. This longing is nothing less than the need to connect to heart wisdom. Since it is unfulfilled in most of us, we have to fill it up with all sorts of substitutes, the most prevalent of which are, sadly, false notions of love. Were we to know heart wisdom, the problems on our planet would radically change for the better. We would know the endless, open-ended mystery of Divine Love, and so do all we could to make sure that others had the opportunity to know it too.

Unlike other holistic developmental models, NLR breaks the teen years into two distinct developmental stages. In the first, WillBeing, two of the most important foods are sensitive respect and the opportunity to express and explore ideals. These foods directly nourish the longing. Since the primary

Attributes	Being	Transmitting Mode	Age	Key Attitude Key Foods
Womb Environment — provides the foundation for future growth				
Birth —The initial hit of LOVE for all involved — Also, the				
Receptivity “TOWARDS LIFE”	**BODYBEING**	**SENSATION**	**0 to 8**	**Key Attitude—** Loving Touch **Key Foods—** Security, Warmth, Nourishment, Flexibility.
Vulnerability “I AND OTHER”	**EMOTIONAL BEING**	**FEELING**	**9 to 12**	**Key Attitude—** Right Modeling **Key Foods—** Fairness, Justice, Caring, Concern, Adaptability, Adventure, Honesty.
Assertion “I ALONE”	**WILLBEING**	**IDEALS and PROJECTION**	**13 to 17**	**Key Attitude—** Sensitive Respect **Key Foods—** Challenges (in the realm of success) Active Activities, Opportunity to Express and work with Ideals, Adventure, Personal Space, Peer Sensitive, Beginning of Responsibility
Questioning “WHO AM I”	**REASONING BEING**	**COMPARISON**	**18 to 23**	**Key Attitude—** Mature Recognition (Recognition of Commitment Recognition of Equality Achievement Recognition Recognition of Recognition) **Key Foods—** Comparison. Exploration, Experimentation, Recapitulation,Suggestion, Investigation, Discernment.

Wisdoms	Poison	Characteristics
with trillions of electro-chemical-tissue communications		
brain is hard wired to transmit sensation at birth		
Belongingness **Boundaries And Strength**	**Physical Threat**	The child comes to know how her body works on this planet. Body-as-environment. Provides for future growth. Absorbs by sensation impressions and observation-imitation. What you see in their bodies is what there is. Loving Touch equals safety. **The Child Is—**Towards-Life, "I am the center of
Trust **Cooperator And Perspective**	**Hypocrisy**	The child learns how to decipher her personal and social feelings. Uses their models as examples. Very susceptible to inspiration. Absorbs by feeling impressions and observation. Transcendent window at 10-1/2 or so. **The Child Is—**Rational and aware of her own mortality for the first time in her life. I care about the feelings of others and what they feel about me.
Autonomy **Individuation, Identity and Personal Power, Freedom**	**Ridicule**	The child solidifies previous experience and defines a "self" to deal with the changes of puberty. Willbeing provides a definite basis for ReasoningBeing comparisons by attempting to define "I". The child has an underlying insecurity with a bravado of confidence. Operates on ideals. Interest in the "shadow" comes to the fore. **The Child Is—**absorbed with her own individuality. But WillBeing ends in doubt and confusion, as the assertions prove inadequate to face life. "I stand alone, (just like my peers)."
Interconnectedness **Humor and Humility Intentionality, Incisiveness, Relationship and Synthesizer**	**Condescension**	The child is able to perceive past and future as a coherent whole. She is able to tap the previous wisdoms (BB, EB, WB). She is also able to research alternatives for herself and create coherent systems that lead back to the child's awareness of self. She can make commitment in relationships into the future, which leads to humility. **The Child Is—**Interconnected and open, questioning, "Who Am I?" Now able to recognize that there is something beyond reason. She looks for meanings.

wisdom is autonomy and the secondary wisdoms are freedom and personal power, the longing makes perfect sense. Autonomy, freedom, and power form the psychological basis for an individuated self. The stage-specific wisdom mobilizes all thoughts, actions, and resources to this end. The longing is the longing for Self and it must start in a formulation of individuated self. Recognizing how compelling this longing is, NLR goes into great detail about Rites of Passage and how to use them with WillBeing children. In addition, NLR has scores of other possible responses that parents and teachers can use to meet this critical developmental need.

NLR's extensive array of applications for all developmental stages is one important way it differs from Pearce's work, and from every other holistic appreciation of human development. Another difference is "The Dance," a unique NLR insight that describes the benefits for parents and teachers when they meet the developmental needs of children. Over and again NLR reminds us that it is wisdom that is at the core of the developmental process. *Therefore, when the parent honors the wisdom of the child, his own wisdom is awakened.* This is the Dance. NLR specifically describes many dance steps for each developmental stage.

The Dance challenges Pearce's postulate, which he shares with many other developmentalists, that there is only a narrow window in which a particular learning can occur. In other words, according to Pearce, if the model for using the higher brain is missing, it is missed forever. The cat experiment is typically used as the grounds for this argument. If a cat is deprived of seeing vertical lines during a certain time of its growth, it will never see them. The same is true for human learning of a mother tongue, for instance. The problem with the argument, however, is that it doesn't account for the incredible plasticity of the human psyche. If one goes from biology to intelligence and always relies on the information from the "hard" sciences, then this postulate makes sense. However, when the focus is on the psyche, we easily notice that humans have accessed wisdom at every stage of life. Adaptability is the hallmark of humanness. Awakening has not been confined to one age or to any culture.

During one of our first discussions together, Joe expressed surprise that we used the word wisdom instead of intelligence. Wisdom, he thought, expressed a maturity that only comes with age. When we told him the word simply means right understanding coupled with spontaneous healthy action, he agreed that his own phrase, stage-specific wisdom, was the better term. The point is that the common sense notion of wisdom does indicate that it is always available to us. Close inspection reveals that it is always with us, that it can never be destroyed. Buried yes, but not obliterated. This is true for Body Wisdom, for Emotional Wisdom, for Will Wisdom, for Reasoning Wisdom and most definitely for Spiritual Wisdom. Our task is to call in the bulldozers and remove the muck, to unbury that which covers who we already are.

> "Development is transpersonal/ spiritual through and through. To deny that is to deny the essential nature of the child."

We believe that Joe must agree. How else could he account for his own evolution, when his own childhood had great deficiencies? Why else would he have invested so much of his life in a spiritual path? Why would he now give so unstintingly of his time to all of us who, if it could only happen in that narrow window, missed frontal lobe activation?

NLR's break from the "narrow window" view of biological developmentalists also shows up in its approach to healing. We have confirmed in our fieldwork that each succeeding wisdom is more complex than its predecessor. This means that it is possible to heal wounds from prior stages by fully activating the wisdom of the current stage. Your child's personality is not determined in the birth canal, at birth, in the first three months of life, in the first six months of life, or in the first six years of life. To assert such is to deny the plasticity of the psyche, the potential that, with developmental sensitivity, *is* the actual human. This does not mean that these are not crucial times in the child's life. Of course they are, and they should be treated with the greatest developmental care. But they are not ultimately determinant. Strict human determinism is utterly false. Even to think in such terms as "determined" raises a host of philosophical questions that are rarely considered by those who make such claims.

Not all wounds can be healed by the succeeding stage. Some are too traumatic and need therapeutic help. But many, many wounds could be healed were the new stage to be met in wisdom-based relationship. And the last great stage of childhood, ReasoningBeing, with its great power to comprehend past and future, can effect the most healing of all. Nature, in its great wisdom, creates this one last chance to enter adulthood whole and healthy.

ReasoningBeing is the last major developmental stage of childhood. The core wisdom is interconnectedness and the secondary wisdoms are humor, humility, and the ability to synthesize systems. Many people do not understand

ReasoningBeing. The poor substitute of intellectualism, and its endless games around data retention and retrieval, blinds people to ReasoningBeing wisdom. Authentic reasoning would never violate the wisdoms of the previous stage-specific wisdoms. These wisdoms are belongingness in BodyBeing, trust in EmotionalBeing, and autonomy in WillBeing. Obviously such acts as pollution and prejudice do violate those wisdoms. They are not reasonable; they violate ReasoningBeing's core wisdom of interconnectedness.

Here, in ReasoningBeing, not only can the longing noted by Joe be satisfied, but the recognition and preparation can occur which allow the child to consciously and deliberately explore the transpersonal realms of the psyche. On this point there is complete accord between Pearce and NLR. The healthy child of the early twenties will naturally turn to the exploration of meaning, purpose, and nature of self and Universe. As a mature ego, she will want to turn on that multi- billion celled cerebral network and tune into Life and Truth. She will seek Love in self, and in relationship, and eventually wish to know it as the fabric of existence.

The startling implication of this is that the ego was never separate, but only conditioned to believe it was. *It is NLR's dec - laration, and tacit in Pearce's work, that the illusion of separation is not natural in any moment of a child's experience.* Each developmental moment is replete with wisdom and can be experienced as such. Each developmental moment is both an expression and definition of wholeness. The child can become conscious of their stage-specific wisdom throughout childhood, within the limits of developmental capabilities.

It is only in ReasoningBeing, however, that we can both comprehend past and future and have the full power of verbal-linguistic skills. It is thus through an aspect of ReasoningBeing stage- specific wisdom that humans can recognize the spiritual dimensions to life and deliberately set up the conditions to actualize it.

Natural Learning Rhythms finds an interesting parallel between stage-specific wisdom and the implicate. The implicate is the realm in which all exists as a potential. It was first described by the great physicist/philosopher David Bohm in his landmark work in quantum mechanics. Using only fieldwork, we categorically stated that the stage-specific wisdom "contains" all the child needs to live in health and wholeness. It is truly her potential, her implicate. Each child, according to her unique tendencies and life circumstance, draws from the wisdom the action that will leave her with the greatest health opportunities. She makes manifest, explicates, according to wisdom needs, no matter how inexplicable her actions are to those around her. Therefore, the only genuine guidance anyone can offer a child must be based on an assessment of wisdom, and on the individual child.

This coincidence of insight into the elegance of human development, and the source from which it springs, is a joy for both Joe and for us. Both approaches are open-ended, yet intimately connected. Parents and teachers are invited into the understanding and soon realize they are the completion of it. How they do, so it is. Wisdom-based relationships can be evolved by all. This is not dogmatic discipline. It is an appreciation, a style, which honors all Life. It is a dance, a wisdom dance, in which everyone wins.

Being open-ended leads both approaches into ever-deeper inquiries into nature and Nature, into life and Spirit. Pearce, appreciating her acumen, quotes his meditation teacher's comment that we don't go back to unity but "move beyond diversity." NLR quotes Blake: "Eternity is in love with productions of time." Truly, by rooting themselves in the Perennial Philosophy (which eclectically appreciates the essential truths permeating all spiritual discovery), both Pearce and NLR vividly demonstrate that development both expresses and defines the pattern that connects. They elevate development beyond behavior studies, beyond cognitive maps. Development is transpersonal/spiritual through and through. To deny that is to deny the essential nature of the child. It is to deny her the opportunity to actualize her potential. It is to deny Life.

Democracy in Action

The Clearwater School in Photos and Text

BY STEPHANIE SARANTOS
(Photographs by Amanda Luff and Elizabeth Peckham)

Stephanie Sarantos, R.N., Ph.D., is a founder and staff member of The Clearwater School. Through her studies in educational psychology and her work as an oncology nurse and a mother of two, she has become committed to creating a school where children are free to learn and grow in their own way and time.

At The Clearwater School, students from 4- to 19-years-old interact, enjoying opportunities to observe, lead, and follow as their abilities and desires dictate. By engaging in trusting relationships, students learn to trust themselves and the choices they make to create their lives.

Through friendships and mentoring relationships, students gain self-awareness, confidence, and mutual respect.

Learning happens all the time, in diverse ways. Students may work independently or in small groups—frequently spending hours of intensely focused time pursuing their interests. There are no preset curricula to interfere with student choices, no bells to interrupt long projects, no standardized tests to measure preset benchmarks. At The Clearwater School, students direct their own education.

To emphasize that students learn in diverse ways, with the help of many people, The Clearwater School hires "staff" rather than "teachers." Staff are highly skilled individuals who support each student's enthusiasm, curiosity, and learning style. They take on many roles: teacher, mentor, and friend. Rather than direct, staff members follow each student's lead to assist them as they pursue their own educational courses.

The opportunity for students to enjoy academic freedom is possible because of the democratic structure of the school. The Clearwater School is self-governed through a democratic process in which students and staff members have an equal vote in decisions affecting the quality of life and day-to-day activities of the school.

The central structures used to govern the community are the School Meeting and the Judicial Committee. Through participation in these bodies, students gain first-hand experience in citizenship and daily practice in debate and ethical reasoning, as they solve real-life problems.

At the weekly School Meeting, students and staff members discuss and vote on decisions ranging from making school rules, to planning parties, to allocating funds. In the Judicial Committee, students and staff work together to address violations of rules and to solve problems.

The School Meeting and the Judicial Committee create and maintain order, and allow students the freedom to initiate and enjoy a diverse range of activities, while keeping each individual accountable to the larger community of students and staff.

The Clearwater School is part of a national network of Sudbury schools that take inspiration from the Sudbury Valley School, a highly successful and pioneering democratic school, established 30 years ago in Framingham, Massachusetts. Students who attend Sudbury schools develop into capable, confident, and creative adults. Students at The Clearwater School enjoy the opportunity to discover for themselves their place in the world.

Find The Clearwater School on the web at http://snonet.org/clearwaterschool, e-mail stephanie@snonet.org, telephone (206) 364-9711, or write to 11748 Lakeside Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125. The Clearwater School welcomes racial, cultural, and religious diversity, and families of every composition.

John Holt and the Origins of Contemporary Homeschooling

BY PATRICK FARENGA

Patrick Farenga worked with the late author/teacher John Holt from 1981 until Holt's death in 1985. He continues Holt's work by publishing materials, writing, and speaking about learning outside of school for children and adults. His most recent project is editing And the Skylark Sings With Me: An Adventure in Homeschooling and Community-Based Education *by David Albert, a joint publishing venture of Holt Associates and New Society Press. Recent speeches by Farenga about homeschooling include engagements in Italy, England, Michigan, and Massachusetts. Farenga is the president of Holt Associates and the publisher of* Growing Without Schooling *magazine (2380 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 104, Cambridge, MA 02140; (617) 864-3100). He lives in Medford, MA, with his wife, Day. They homeschool their three daughters, aged 12, 9, and 6.*

Far from being a new idea, homeschooling has grown and developed over the centuries, and came into focus in the late 20th century as the forces of standardization and cultural homogenization took over schools and people sought alternatives to them. Homeschooling didn't emerge from the vision or work of any one person, and it is not the province of any one political party. By focusing on the work of author and teacher John Holt though, one can trace not only a personal journey from school reformer to unschooler, but also an intellectual and educational legacy that led to homeschooling that is little reported by conservative and liberal media alike.

The sixties and seventies were times of great ferment for new ideas about education. Some education and social critics, like John Holt, became popular writers by questioning methods of schooling. The battles over look-say reading methods versus phonics, training teachers to be gentle facilitators or drill instructors, whether to encourage hands-on learning or test-taking skills, were well-worn battles to these writers even in the sixties. Many school reformers, such as Herbert Kohl, noted that it is a wide variety of methods, materials, schedules, and techniques that help children learn, and that the teacher should have the freedom to use any combination of things and ideas to help students. Further, some writers, such as A. S. Neill and Holt, suggested that the student should have complete freedom to choose how, when, and from whom they wanted to learn. In the early sixties, Paul Goodman, in *Compulsory Miseducation* and *Growing Up Absurd*, argued that compelling children to attend school is not the best use of their youth, and that education is more a community function than an institutional one. This idea was developed and amplified over the years by many authors, but most forcefully by John Holt.

John Holt was a fifth grade teacher who worked in private schools. In 1964, his book *How Children Fail* created an uproar with his observations that forcing children to learn makes them unnaturally self-conscious about learning and stifles children's initiative and

creativity by making them focus on how to please the teachers and the schools with the answers they will reward best, a situation that creates a fake type of learning. To paraphrase Holt, the only difference between a good student and a bad student is that the good student is careful not to forget what he studied until after the test is taken. His subsequent book, *How Children Learn* (1967), also became widely known. The two are still in print and together they have sold over a million and a half copies and have been translated into over 14 languages.

Holt went on to become a visiting lecturer at Harvard and Berkeley, but his tenure at both places was short-lived. Holt did not feel the school establishment was serious about change in the ways he wanted to go, such as changing the relationship of the child to the teacher and the school to the community. During this time Holt wrote two books about why he thought schools weren't working and how they could be made better: *The Underachieving School* (1969) and *What Do I Do Monday?* (1970). Holt was intrigued by the free school movement of the late sixties and supported it as a way to help children who weren't thriving in conventional schools. However, by the early seventies Holt developed reservations about free schools and proposed other ways to reunite living and learning.

In *Freedom and Beyond* (1972), Holt openly questioned and analyzed the free school movement, and in particular what educators really mean when they use the words freedom, discipline, authority, and choice. Most importantly, it is in this book that Holt decides that bringing more freedom into the classroom is not the solution to educational problems; he recasts the problem as a social one rather than a technical one. He writes:

> People, even children, are educated much more by the whole society around them and the general quality of life in it than they are by what happens in schools. The dream of many school people, that schools can be places where virtue is preserved and passed on in a world otherwise empty of it, now seems to me a sad and dangerous illusion. It might have worked in the Middle Ages; it can't work in a world of cars, jets, TV, and the mass media.... The beyond in the title Freedom and Beyond means, therefore, that we must look beyond the question of reforming schools and at the larger question of schools and schooling itself. Can they do all the things we ask them to do? Are they the best means of doing it? What might be other or better ways? (*Freedom and Beyond*, p. 4)

Other writers at this time also proposed ways to alter compulsory schooling. Hal Bennett wrote an operator's manual in 1972 entitled *No More Public School,* which explains how you can take your child out of public school and educate him at home. In *The 12-Year Sentence* (1974), a collection of essays edited by William F. Rickenbacker, one of the writers proposed that gifted parents should be able to teach their own children if they wish. But it was Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* (1971) that most influenced Holt. After *Deschooling Society* appeared, Holt studied and corresponded with Illich at length, and was deeply influenced by Illich's analysis, particularly with his analysis that school serves a deep social function by firmly maintaining the status quo of social class for the majority of students. Further, schools view education as a commodity they sell, rather than as a life-long process they can aid, and this, according to Illich, creates a substance that is not equally distributed, is used to judge people unfairly, and — based on their lack of school credentials — prevents people from assuming roles they are otherwise qualified for.

By the late seventies Holt had given up on the possibility that schools would welcome and assist the sorts of changes he and others were suggesting. He sought ways to make these changes as individuals and communities, thus bypassing, rather than confronting, school resistance to these ideas. One tactic Holt wrote about was to fight for children's rights — which he thought would not only help kids escape bad schools, but also help them escape bad social situations — by granting children the full protection and responsibilities of US citizenship. Holt's *Escape from Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children* (1974) continues to stir passions on both sides of the argument, particularly now that some of the scenarios Holt discusses, such as giving children the right to choose their own legal guardian, the right to control their own learning, and the right to legal and financial responsibility, have come into our courts twenty- five years later. A concept that runs throughout Holt's work gets further developed in this book. Even though our institutions may not be the way we want them to be in order to bring about a better world, we can still act, in our daily lives, as far as we can, as if that world existed. For instance, we don't have to wait for the courts to grant children the right of privacy for us to act as if they have a right to privacy. In this book, Holt also expands on his theme that it is not what children are taught, but how they are treated, that determines the sort of adult they will become. Holt continued to develop these ideas and practices in his next book, which led directly to his work in homeschooling.

In *Instead of Education: Ways to Help People Do Things Better* (1976), Holt not only described actual non-compulsory schools, learning centers, and informal learning arrangements in action, but also proposed

> a new Underground Railroad to help children escape from S-chools. Some may say that such a railroad would be unfair, since only a few children could get on it. But most slaves could not escape from slavery, either, yet no one suggested or would suggest that because all the slaves could not be freed, none should be. Besides, we have to blaze a new trail if only so that others may follow. The

> Children's Underground Railroad, like all movements of social protest and change, must begin small; it will grow larger as more children ride it. (*Instead of Education*, p. 218)

In this book, Holt proposed removing children from school legally or as an act of civil disobedience. While the education establishment barely recognized this particular book of Holt's, it struck a chord with some parents. Some wrote to Holt explaining that they were teaching their children at home legally, others that they were doing so underground. Some were rural families, some city dwellers, others were in communes. Intrigued, Holt corresponded with them all and decided to create a newsletter that would help put these like- minded people in touch with one another. In August of 1977, the first issue of *Growing Without Schooling* (GWS) was published, and the nation's, and probably the world's, first periodical about homeschooling was born. Holt wanted to help bring about a social change not by writing about it from a distance while employed at a university or at a think tank, but by being engaged in action with like-minded people. It is, I feel, important to note that Holt never believed that more than a very small percentage of parents would homeschool even if it were a widely accepted practice, which is why he never gave up trying to help schools change. In her editorial comments in *A Life Worth Living: Selected Letters of John Holt*, Susannah Sheffer writes (p. 11) that during the last years of Holt's life he was collecting material for a book about school reform, indicating that even though he had made conscious resolutions to stop trying to change what he could not change, he apparently never quite lost the hope that if shown the way more clearly we would do what needed to be done. Holt urged educators and parents to catch the spirit of unschooling, be inspired by the variety of approaches and methods homeschoolers show, and reconsider assumptions about schooling based on what ordinary parents, as well as some alternative schools, were doing with children. It is in this regard that Holt is so different from many education writers and school reformers. He never felt that only trained teachers should teach students. Holt never studied education in school, which he considered an advantage since his mind was thus not full of assumptions about what kids can and can't do. He was a practitioner who learned from what worked and what didn't, in his experience, and he felt very strongly that any concerned adult could do as well or better than he in this regard.

In this sense, his book *Never Too Late: My Musical Autobiography* (1978) is instructive, not only as a description of how an adult learns new things, in this case how to play the cello, but also as testimony against the view that one must become expert in something before one can truly love it and do it effectively with others. Holt (and we who heard him play!) knew he would never be in a league with Yo-Yo Ma, but that never stopped him from playing the cello. Likewise, Holt's support of homeschooling parents, many of whom have never been professional teachers, is inspiring. Holt often wrote that there is no need to duplicate institutional teaching and assumptions in non-institutional settings, and he therefore saw no need to make parents anxious about their abilities to learn from their children how to best teach them. As long as children and parents communicate clearly, solutions can be found for all situations, utilizing family and community resources.

For instance, Holt wrote in the second issue of GWS about how a welfare mother who doesn't know how to read can still teach her own kids by finding a child, relative, or friend who can teach them all to read. He cites various mass literacy programs used in a number of poor countries in which as fast as people learn to read they begin to teach others, as well as various schools whose policy of allowing older children to teach younger children to read has borne excellent results. He notes that reading, and teaching reading, are not a mystery. The schools, in teaching the poor (and the rich, too) that no one except a trained teacher can teach, have done them (and all of us) a great and crippling injury and wrong. Trained teachers are not trained in teaching, but in classroom management, i.e., in controlling, manipulating, measuring, and classifying large numbers of children. These may be useful skills for schools, or people working in schools. But they have nothing whatever to do with teaching — helping others to learn things.

The growth of homeschooling often led to strange bedfellows, or mixed allies as Holt referred to them in GWS:

> Those who read GWS, and want to take or keep their children out of schools, may have very different, in some cases opposed reasons for doing this.
>
> [For example], some may feel that the schools spend too much time on what they call the Basics; others that they don't spend enough.
>
> Some may feel that the schools teach a dog-eat-dog competitiveness; others that they teach a mealy-mouth Socialism.
>
> Some may feel that the schools teach too much religion; others that they don't teach enough, but teach instead a shallow atheistic humanism. I think the schools degrade both science and religion, and do not encourage either strong faith or strong critical thought.
>
> What is important is not that all readers of GWS should agree on [the reasons for a family to homeschool], but that we should respect our differences while we work for what we agree on, our right and the right of all people to take their children out of schools, and help, plan, or direct their learning in the ways they think best.

Twenty-two years after Holt wrote that, more and more writers about homeschooling keep creating new ways to define themselves, since they agree only with bits and pieces of vari-

ous practices. Some are uncomfortable with unschooling, since Holt asks parents to respect children and allow them freedom to pursue their intellectual interests (although he never dictates that they do so), particularly when these interests veer away from school subject matter; some prefer to literally do home school, with the national anthem sung each morning, six hours of school work with a break for recess, and so on. Other parents consider most of Holt's ideas untenable, but like his lifelong advocacy of using whatever works — with parental discretion — to help children learn. They refer to themselves as eclectic homeschoolers. Some will follow various curricula. Some purchase canned curricula and follow them to the letter; others purchase curricula and use them as broad outlines. Some homeschoolers work with private schools through the mail or the internet. Some prefer no label at all, daring you to capture the richness of their family life with a phrase.

As homeschooling has grown, so has the market for selling a variety of methods, philosophies, products, and services to homeschoolers. Some families prefer to develop communal resources rather than buying them; they join together to form homeschooling co-ops and learning centers in people's homes or to share facilities, costs, and teachers for group instruction. The idea that we need to have one best way for all children to learn is effectively refuted by the diversity and growth of the homeschooling movement. But this was hardly enough for Holt. In 1983, he wrote, "A life worth living and work worth doing that is what I want for children (and all people) — not just, or not even, something called a better education" (*A Life Worth Living,* p. 266).

Holt presided over the slow but steady increase in subscribers to *Growing Without Schooling,* and in 1983 revised his two most popular books, *How Children Learn* and *How Children Fail*. Holt felt the revisions were needed in light of his work with homeschoolers. The changes made both books significantly different from their original printings, and Holt kept the original text alongside the newer text so that the reader can see the differences. Both books are worth reading on their own of course, but they also serve as demonstrations of Holt's philosophy that living and learning are interrelated, that we learn more from our mistakes and successes than from tests and instruction, and that it is never too late to learn more about ourselves and the world in which we live.

In the late seventies and early eighties, Holt would often speak about homeschooling to small groups of parents. Often Holt would get a speaking engagement at a large university and when he was done there he would travel to speak to local homeschoolers in smaller venues, such as parks, homes, and small hotels. By the mid-eighties, large-scale (1000 or more attendees) homeschooling conferences began to spring up across the nation, but Holt would not be able to address them. In 1985, John Holt died of cancer at the age of 62. His final book, *Learning All the Time: How Small Children Begin To Read, Write, Count And Investigate The World, Without Being Taught,* which contains a lot of writing that Holt did for GWS, was published posthumously in 1989.

The history of homeschooling is still being written. Homeschooling continues to spread across the United States and other countries; as of this writing, GWS contains listings for homeschooling support groups in Canada, Ireland, England, France, Australia, Spain, South Africa, New Zealand, and Japan. Homeschooling is legal in all 50 states. One recent benchmark of homeschooling's growing popularity is that *Newsweek* (October 5, 1998) ran a cover story about it with the headline, "More Than A Million Kids And Growing: Can It Work For Your Family?"

Some will argue that I assign Holt too big a place in the history of homeschooling, since others have influenced more people to actually undertake homeschooling than did Holt. I don't dispute that others influenced the growth of homeschooling as much as, if not more than, Holt, particularly among religiously oriented homeschoolers. But John Holt does not only speak to the choir of would-be and current homeschoolers, political parties, or education theorists. His work speaks to adults and children in school as well as out; it addresses larger social concerns beyond school, and continues to inspire thousands of people from all walks of life.

Notes

1. Unschooling was Holt's neologism for describing what families were doing at home with their kids during school hours. He created this word in order to avoid giving the impression that families were merely creating miniature schools in their homes, as the word homeschooling connotes. However, Holt used unschooling and homeschooling interchangeably in his writing, and eventually felt that homeschooling, for better or worse, was the term most people would use when discussing the idea that one can learn without going to school.

2. *In Instead of Education* (p. 19), Holt uses the spelling S-chool to denote "[t]he schools for educators, which get and hold their students by the threat of jail or uselessness or poverty," and s-chools to denote "[t]he schools for do-ers, which help people explore the world as they choose."

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My Forever Bed-Buddy

BY SAMARA MILES

There was never a doubt, never a doubt in my mind. We weren't meant to be lonely.
Never a doubt. I knew that I'd find you someday.
— John Denver

When I was little, my grandmother died. It was not something sudden. In fact, we saw her death coming for quite a while. You see, my grandma had cancer. She was sick the entire seven years that I knew her, though she wasn't extremely ill until the last three years or so.

Grams was my best buddy. Well, of course, I had other pals, but Grams was special. When I think of her, I think of what seem like hundreds of vacations, giggle-fits, and times of quiet closeness. She had a big, soft lap, which I loved to climb up into. She embroidered numerous sheets and taught me how to sew.

Sometimes, I don't think that I appreciated her enough. Even while she was alive, I knew that I shouldn't take her for granted. When we look back on our lives, we can always recall moments that *could* have been better; but the fact is, we can't change a thing, and so we must simply go on and live our lives, with or without the ones we love. We should live so that, when we look back, we *don't* see an event that we wish were different.

Not that I regret much about my relationship with Grams, except for one incident. It was my sixth Christmas and her last. On my want-list I had written, among numerous other things, "a pretty ring." I had imagined a very particular kind of ring, a gold band with a purple stone. So naturally, as an impish, feisty, sometimes snotty little naïve girl, I expected to receive that ring. I can recall Grams' reaction when she read my list: "Hmm, you want a pretty ring, my little butterfly cheeks?" She spoke with a kind, southern voice. (She called me "butterfly cheeks" because she said that I had the softest cheeks; and she would often call me over to sit on her lap and we'd sit, cheek-to-cheek, or I'd give her a butterfly kiss with my eyelashes.) I nodded yes, smiling knowingly to myself, but pretending that I didn't know what she was thinking. Sure enough, my mama measured my ring finger with a string, and then the string disappeared somewhere within Grams' purse.

That Christmas, my mother handed me a bag and said, "Grandma wants you to open this." My family seemed very excited. I lifted from the bag a little jewelry case, inside of which there was the most exquisite ring I would probably ever see. It had a small, thin gold band, with a delicate golden butterfly on top, and a tiny emerald in the center. The ring was beautiful. I slipped my new ring, dramatically and slowly, onto my fourth finger, expecting it to glisten and shine as everyone applauded. But the intended effect was spoiled when the ring proved to be too big and I had to switch fingers.

Blinded by the idea of my imagined ring, I was not exactly pleased; rather, I was slightly disappointed. Actually, I was more than disappointed. Because this wasn't the ring I had expected to receive, I refused to wear it. We opened more presents, and only later that day, as the sun was setting and Grams had taken

Samara Miles is a 15-year-old unschooler living in Southern California. She spends her time writing, playing guitar, painting, listening to music, dancing, learning new and interesting things, daydreaming, being with her friends, and just enjoying life. She is currently preparing to take the PSAT, and plans on enrolling in a community college writing course next year. "My Forever Bed Buddy," which Sam wrote for a college writing course in the Spring of 1998, is in memory of her grandmother, Doris E. Miles, who died of cancer in 1991.

Cobby my little, curly-blonde-haired brother for a walk, did I realize the value of the ring that Grams had given me. Horrified that I had been rude, and nearly in tears, I rushed into the oncoming twilight and encountered Grams and Cobby walking down a hill, Cobby zooming on his red tricycle, and Grams sauntering peacefully after him. "Grams, Grams, I'm so sorry," I cried. "I love the ring. It's beautiful! I don't mean to take it for granted. " She assured me that everything was okay. She said that she wasn't angry at me; but, for a long time, I regretted that I had ever been snotty and had not seen the beauty of what I had received, regardless of what I had dreamed of getting. I still have "the butterfly ring," as I call it, and it means as much to me now as ever.

Of course, regretting that event won't change anything. We must overcome our past troubles and move on, and luckily, I have managed to do so in the case of my ring. To someone else, this incident might seem silly or unimportant, but, to me at that time, it was traumatic, because Grams was so special to me that my hurting her would have broken my heart. We were buddies, friends, a grandmother and her granddaughter, so hurting the one meant hurting the other. We saw each other often; therefore, it would have been embarrassing to face her if I had upset her a great deal (though the ring affair probably meant more to me than it ever did to her).

As I think back on my life now, probably many of the major changes that occurred during my first seven years of life were influenced by Grams and her illness. In fact, we moved to our present house in part to live closer to Grams, so that we could visit with her more frequently. However, when she did visit, I would often run off to play when I could have spent the time with her. At that age, I considered sitting with the adults a boring pastime that I only engaged in when necessary.

Needless to say, Grams was a very special person to me. She was a regular part of my life, and maybe because she knew that she was dying, she was determined to be as close to me as possible. Perhaps as a result of her determination, I frequently spent the night at Grams' and Gramps' house. She lived in a neighborhood which I thought of as familiar, safe, comfortable and old. For me, going to their house was a treat. The evenings I spent with Grams and Gramps would usually go like this: After arriving at their house, I would eagerly and impatiently anticipate my mom's leaving, so that Grams and I might take a walk. I always treasured walks with her. Big, pretty trees shaded the sidewalks on which we wandered. I loved hopping on the enormous footprints that were encased in a square of cement outside Grams' and Gramps' house. After the walk, we might play a game, go for a drive somewhere, or, more often, make dinner (TV dinners, always the most fun). We usually ate on TV trays *in the family room* and watched "Wheel Of Fortune" and "Jeopardy" with Gramps.

> "Though Grams continually fought her illness long and hard, with strength, courage, and determination, the end of her road began to grow clearer."

Before we did anything else, Grams and I would take a shower together I was fascinated by the scars from her numerous surgeries and by her soft, soft, soft grandmother skin and then get into our pajamas. Then came the exciting part. Grams and I were, what we so eloquently termed, "bed buddies." Every time I came to spend the night, Gramps gave up the bed he shared with Grams. Instead, he slept on the old, ugly green couch in his study, while Grams and I took the big, soft bed with the lace bedspread. In bed, with the lights turned out, we'd giggle and whisper and have girl-talk. Once, we read in the dark with a flashlight, under the covers. We whispered and read and giggled, and then fell asleep, cuddled up together. When we woke the next morning, Grams would always tell me how I had kicked her all night, and I would always apologize profusely, puzzled at how I could have kicked her when I neither meant to nor remembered doing so.

Going to Grams' house meant my having other fun, special adventures, as well. Often I spent Monday nights, so that I could go to breakfast with Grams and her friends the next morning, an event which I always considered fun. We'd get dressed up Grams always dressed up and drive down to Waffle House, IHOP, or some other restaurant chain for "Breakfast With the Church Ladies." Those mornings were always a treat. One day I remember especially well. We ordered whatever suited our fancy, and as the morning passed, I grew less shy and began to talk more and more until Grams, laughing, told me that I was such a chatterbox. Growing embarrassed, I stared at the blueberry syrup quietly, but pretty soon I was off talking again. Well, can you blame me? They were all such spunky, cute old ladies. I especially loved Ruby, who seemed to me small, wrinkled and fragile, and who reminded me of a red ruby stone. I drew her a picture on a place mat.

Grams and I shared other special things, too. When I rode in her big, white Oldsmobile with blue, plush seats, she would hand me a bunch of tissues, as she had done with my mother when my mom was a child. I then carefully and perfectly folded each one and put them into her purse. We would often listen to John Denver on our car trips, since I didn't like her

church music. We sang along to "Homegrown Tomatoes" (Grams' singing with her southern accent was bound to be a treat) and hummed mournfully to "Never a Doubt." Once, Grams spilled her hot coffee on the tape cover. Years later, Gramps gave me the tape. Now, every time I look at and see the coffee stain, I think of Grams.

Sometimes, going to Grams' would inspire my creativity. Once at sunset, as I lay daydreaming on her driveway, looking at the sprinklers casting diamond drops of water on the green grass blades and at the sun shining golden rays down on everything, an idea suddenly flew into my mind. I rushed into the house and ran to my mother. "Give me some paper," I demanded hurriedly. When she asked what for, I grew impatient, afraid that I would lose the lovely vision. "Give me some paper!" I insisted. She gave me some, and I rushed back outside to scribble down the words that had calmly formed in my head so calmly, in fact, that I had hardly known they were there until they were nearly gone.

So many memories. Once, our whole family went with Grams and Gramps on a trip to the Grand Canyon. The Canyon was wonderful; it was so big! But what I treasured even more was the time with Grams. I remember the long, endless drive to the Canyon. I always loved driving with Grams in her car. She made the trip fun by zooming over bumps in the road in such a way that my stomach would drop. I giggled over my little dog, who perched on a towel on the rear dashboard above the back seats. After the long hours spent in the car, and the many nights we had slept in hotels, I looked forward to camping.

However, when we arrived at the Canyon, the sky rained and thundered in a way that I had never seen before, and my family's tent leaked. My 3-year-old brother became sick, and so my sister and I went to stay with Grams and Gramps in their *big tent* with the open screened space in the front for Grams' own beauty parlor and wash tub. Many times, in the freezing cold night, I took baths which I detested standing up in the washtub. Now, I can see that the tent isn't as amazing and big as it had seemed when I was young; but during the Grand Canyon trip, sleeping in such a big, exciting tent was an adventure.

We vacationed at other exciting places, as well. We stayed at a condo in Palm Springs, and in what I thought were millions of weird, strange hotels in "foreign," far-away places. And then there were the simple, quiet visits common, but special. I loved my time with my spunky, lovable Grams, though all the while her health was slipping away from us. She fought and struggled, and fought some more, but eventually she grew sicker and sicker. "I have to hold on so that they remember me," she frequently told my mom, sadly.

Though Grams continually fought her illness long and hard, with strength, courage, and determination, the end of her road began to grow clearer. She underwent surgeries and pain, to live as long as possible so that we would not forget her. I am lucky. I have seven years of her to remember and cherish forever. My brother, only three when she died, tries his hardest, but remembers little. Was her effort to hang in with us done only in vain, then? I prefer to say not, because it gave me that much longer to be with her.

The day arrived on which we were to discover Grams' fate. I can still clearly picture a large gathering of relatives in the waiting room of the hospital. For me, sitting still was boring. I strung endless lengths of beaded jewelry, which I distributed among my family members. Waiting also were aunts and cousins who were patient and entertaining, but, all in all, hospitals are simply no fun. I remember my Aunt Jo smoking and smoking outside the hospital, her face drawn and wrinkled and sorrowful. Everyone looked so worried, and rightfully so. Grams was undergoing yet another surgery.

Then, the doctors called us: "The family of Doris E. Miles." We went into a hall, away from the waiting room, where we met with a tall, blue-suited, masked doctor. Though I didn't understand what he was saying, I knew it was bad, because suddenly everyone was crying. And then I found out. Grams' cancer had progressed too far. There was nothing they could do to save her.

For the next two weeks, we spent our days by her side, at the hospital. I didn't fully understand that my beloved Grams had very little time left to live. Her dying didn't seem real. Had I understood more of what was going on, the hospital visits may not have seemed so boring. Plus, though I wouldn't admit it, I hated kissing her now, because she smelled like medicine. She was weaker than she had been, and she had tubes in her and a big IV stand by her bed. This was not the Grams I knew. She was too thin and sick.

And yet, even though I hated the sight of Grams, I still loved being around her. I sang her a song about a girl and her grandma, read to her, and talked to her tentatively. But soon, I could barely stand to look at her, because, when I did, I would cry, or wonder why I *wasn't* crying. Life was grim; everyone was melancholy.

Then, she came home to that old house with the footprinted sidewalk. I remember Gramps pulling up in his car, helping Grams out. She moved so incredibly slowly that I knew she and I would have no more walks and no more giggling fits which we loved to call our fits of "high- steria." But, I thought, she's home now, so maybe she's getting better. I thought there was hope once again.

Shortly after she came home, hospice set up a hospital bed next to her big beautiful bed on which she would lay for the remainder of her now short life. We visited her every day; we were always by her side. Now my mom and aunt took gentle care of her. Soon, Grams rarely spoke anymore, except to speak the names of her deceased parents, and those of her children, long gone. I amused myself by coloring or by sitting by her bed and reading aloud, but I still found the days to be boring, difficult, and painful. Before she had been too sick, she had loved to listen to me read to her. I remember that, one morning, we sat

in the armchairs by her sliding doors, and I read her poems from a golden-covered book. It was a beautiful moment, me reading the lovely words to her, Grams sitting back, listening intently. But if she were listening now, I couldn't tell.

One morning, I stood by her side while my aunt and mother cared for her. In soothing voices they explained to her what they were doing, step by step. And then, she died. She just stopped breathing. "She's dead," my mom said in a choked voice. "Go tell the others." I ran around the house, whispering, "Grams is dead. Grams is dead." We gathered and stood around her bed while her heart stopped beating, then closed her mouth and sea-green eyes and said good-bye in tearful voices. Gramps was crying; mom was crying. Though I was sad, I didn't understand why I wasn't crying. It just didn't seem as if she were really gone, as if she really *could* be gone. Although we had been prepared for her death, somehow, we can never be prepared enough for someone's dying.

We called my dad, leaving a message on his answering machine at work. His office mate gave him the news. We called my sister and other relatives. Afterward I sat on the wall outside Grams' and Gramps' house, drinking iced tea, pondering the fresh morning, and feeling gloomy, but not gloomy enough, it seemed to me.

I could talk about the funeral, but that would be useless, because Grams was not there. Funerals are for the people who are left behind, not for the dead. Besides, the funeral seemed fake. The adults threw flowers, roses. Were they white or red? I didn't get to throw one, although I had wanted to. I seem to remember that it was raining, but maybe it was sunny. I remember much of the funeral as a haze and blur of family members and grief. She was buried. My Grams had been conquered. No, her body had been conquered. Her soul lived on.

The year following my grandma's death, Gramps went into the hospital for heart surgery, shortly after which he remarried. Many of the family members resented his wife. I suppose she had it hard. But I grew to love her; there was even a period when I tried to call her Grandma. I desperately needed that figure to reappear in my life. However, there is a special bond formed between a grandmother and her granddaughter that cannot be replaced; and eventually, I accepted the fact that nobody can ever take Grams' place.

Grams taught me about death and about love, and I will never forget her. She taught me to live my life in the present, because once someone is gone, we can never go back. Maybe the person can live on with you. The rest of my family continually felt Grams' presence after her death. I wondered over and over why, hard as I tried, I couldn't feel her. A tree in our backyard, named after her, finally bloomed one year after a long season of bareness, and I felt *some* peace with that. I wrote in my diary, "There are little pink flowers all over the apple tree. Grams is alive!!!" I tried talking to her, asking her if she had ever found the fluffy, white, baked potato she had so often yearned for. I cried about her years later, just by thinking of her, looking at the apple tree, or hearing "Never A Doubt."

Still, as I remember her now, I could cry again, because she is not here with me in person. It is true that I can think of the many happy times she and I spent together, and remember what a wonderful person she was. As important as sad memories may be, though, I still find it hard to think of her as being deathly ill. I prefer to remember Grams as she was in her healthier days, the Grams who was my bed-buddy, who giggled with me under the sheets, who vacationed with us to distant lands, and who sat with me peacefully, cheek-to-cheek.

In the excerpts that follow, teacher and educational theorist Herbert Kohl explains why some learners might choose to engage in an activity that Kohl labels "not-learning," an assertive practice on the part of the student that, as Kohl explains elsewhere in his book, "is often and disastrously mistaken for failure to learn or the inability to learn." Indeed, far from being disabled, active not-learners, as Kohl demonstrates, quite ably understand both why forced-learning environments are inherently dangerous and thus why the student's assent to learning is so crucial. Ultimately, such active learners teach us all, as they do Kohl, the limits of our own assumptions, as well as the possibilities for our own growth.

I Won't Learn from You!

BY HERBERT KOHL

An educator, author, and activist, Herbert Kohl has been working for fairness, social justice, and what he calls "decency" since the mid 1960s. In his numerous books, including 36 Children, The Open Classroom, *and* Reading, How To, *Kohl has vividly shown how education might be practiced when it is based on an intrinsic respect for young people's hopes and diverse cultural heritages. Kohl has taught in New York City public schools, in alternative public schools in California, and in colleges, and has been active in progressive education organizations.*

Learning how to not-learn is an intellectual and social challenge; sometimes you have to work very hard at it. It consists of an active, often ingenious, willful rejection of even the most compassionate and well-designed teaching. It subverts attempts at remediation as much as it rejects learning in the first place. It was through insight into my own not-learning that I began to understand the inner world of students who chose to not-learn what I wanted to teach. Over the years I've come to side with them in their refusal to be molded by a hostile society and have come to look upon not- learning as positive and healthy in many situations.

Before looking in detail at some of my students' not-learning and the intricate ways in which it was part of their self-respect and identity, I want to share one of my own early ventures into not-learning and self-definition. I cannot speak Yiddish, though I have had opportunities to learn from the time I was born. My father's parents spoke Yiddish most of the time and since my family lived downstairs from them in a two-family house for fourteen of my first seventeen years, my failure to learn wasn't from lack of exposure. My father speaks both Yiddish and English and never indicated that he wouldn't teach me Yiddish. Nor did he ever try to coerce me to learn the language, so I never had educational traumas associated with learning Yiddish. My mother and her family had everything to do with it. They didn't speak Yiddish at all. Learning Yiddish meant being party to conversations that excluded my mother. I didn't reject my grandparents and their language. It's just that I didn't want to be included in conversations unless my mother was also included. In solidarity with her, I learned how to not-learn Yiddish.

There was Yiddish to be heard everywhere in my environment, except at public school: on the streets, at home, in every store. Learning to not-learn Yiddish meant that I had to forget Yiddish words as soon as I heard them. When words stuck in my head I had to refuse to associate the sounds with any meaning. If someone told a story in Yiddish, I had to talk to myself quietly in English or hum to myself. If a relative greeted me in Yiddish I responded with the uncomprehending look I had rehearsed for those occasions. I also remember learning to concentrate on the component sounds of words and thus shut out the speaker's meaning or

intent. In doing so, I allowed myself to be satisfied with understanding the emotional flow of a conversation without knowing what people were saying. I was doing just the reverse of what beginning readers are expected to do — read words and understand meanings instead of getting stuck on particular letters and the sounds they make. In effect I used phonics to obliterate meaning.

In not-learning Yiddish, I had to ignore phrases and gestures, even whole conversations, as well as words. And there were many lively, interesting conversations upstairs at my grandparents'. They had meetings about union activities, talked about family matters and events in Europe and later in Israel. They discussed articles in the *Daily Forward*, the Yiddish newspaper, and plays downtown in the Yiddish theater. Everyone was a poet, and everybody had an opinion. I let myself read hands and faces, and I imagined ideas and opinions bouncing around the room. I experienced these conversations much in the way I learned to experience Italian opera when I was fourteen. I had a sense of plot and character and could follow the flow and drama of personal interaction, yet I had no idea of the specifics of what was being said. To use another image: it was as if I were at a foreign-language movie with my father, my uncles, and my grandmother providing English subtitles whenever I asked for help understanding what was going on. I allowed myself to be content with this partial knowledge, but now I mourn the loss of the language and culture of my father's family that it entailed.

“Failure is characterized by the frustrated will to know, whereas not-learning involves the will to refuse knowledge.”

Deciding to actively not-learn something involves closing off part of oneself and limiting one's experience. It can require actively refusing to pay attention, acting dumb, scrambling one's thoughts, and overriding curiosity. The balance of gains and losses resulting from such a turning away from experience is difficult to assess. I still can't tell how much I gained or lost by not- learning Yiddish. I know that I lost a language that would have enriched my life, but I gained an understanding of the psychology of active not-learning that has been very useful to me as a teacher.

Because not-learning involves willing rejection of some aspect of experience, it can often lead to what appears to be failure. For example, in the case of some youngsters, not-learning to read can be confused with failing to learn to read if the rejection of learning is overlooked as a significant factor.

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Failure is characterized by the frustrated will to know, whereas not-learning involves the will to refuse knowledge. Failure results from a mismatch between what the learner wants to do and is able to do. The reasons for failure may be personal, social, or cultural, but whatever they are, the results of failure are most often a loss of self-confidence accompanied by a sense of inferiority and inadequacy. Not-learning produces thoroughly different effects. It tends to strengthen the will, clarify one's definition of self, reinforce self-discipline, and provide inner satisfaction. Not-learning can also get one in trouble if it results in defiance or a refusal to become socialized in ways that are sanctioned by dominant authority.

Not-learning tends to take place when someone has to deal with unavoidable challenges to her or his personal and family loyalties, integrity, and identity. In such situations there are forced choices and no apparent middle ground. To agree to learn from a stranger who does not respect your integrity causes a major loss of self. The only alternative is to not-learn and reject the stranger's world.

In the course of my teaching career I have seen children choose to not-learn many different skills, ideas, attitudes, opinions, and values. At first I confused not-learning with failing. When I had youngsters in my classes who were substantially “behind” in reading, I assumed that they had failed to learn how to read. Therefore I looked for the sources of their failure in the reading programs they were exposed to, in their relationships with teachers and other adults in authority, and in the social and economic conditions of their lives. I assumed that something went wrong when they faced a written text, that either they made errors they didn't know how to correct or they were the victims of bad teaching.

Other causes of failure I searched for were mismatches between the students' language and the language of the schools or between the students' experiences and the kind of experience presupposed by their teachers or the reading texts. In all of these cases I assumed that my students had failed at something they had tried to do. Sometimes I was correct, and then it was easy to figure out a strategy to help them avoid old errors and learn, free of failure. But there were many cases I came upon where obviously intelligent students were beyond success or failure when it came to reading or other school-related learning. They had consciously placed themselves outside the entire system that was trying to coerce or seduce them into learning and spent all their time and energy in the classroom devising ways of not-learning, short-circuiting the business of

failure altogether. They were engaged in a struggle of wills with authority, and what seemed to be at stake for them was nothing less than their pride and integrity. Most of them did not believe that they were failures or that they were inferior to students who succeeded on the schools' terms, and they were easy to distinguish from the wounded self-effacing students who wanted to learn but had not been able to do so.

I remember one student, Barry, who was in one of my combined kindergarten/first-grade classes in Berkeley in the 1970s. He had been held back in the first grade by his previous teacher for being uncooperative, defiant, and "not ready for the demands of second grade." He was sent to my class because it was multi-age graded, and the principal hoped I could get him to catch up and go on with other students his age by the end of the year. Barry was confident and cocky but not rude. From his comments in class it was clear that he was quite sensitive and intelligent. The other students in the class respected him as the best fighter and athlete in class, and as a skilled and funny storyteller.

During the first week of school, one of the students mentioned to me that their last year's teacher had been afraid of Barry. I've seen a number of cases where white teachers treat very young African American boys as if they were seventeen, over six feet tall, addicted to drugs and menacing. Barry was a victim of that manifestation of racism. He had evidently been given the run of the school the previous year — had been allowed to wander the halls at will, refuse participation in group activities, and avoid any semblance of academic work. Consequently he fell behind and was not promoted from first to second grade.

The first time I asked Barry to sit down and read with me he threw a temper tantrum and called me all kinds of names. We never got near a book. I had to relate to his behavior, not his reading. There was no way for me to discover the level of his skills or his knowledge of how reading works. I tried to get him to read a few more times and watched his responses to me very carefully. His tantrums clearly were manufactured on the spot. They were a strategy of not-reading. He never got close enough to a book to have failed to learn how to read.

The year before, this response had the effect he wanted. He was let alone and, as a bonus, gained status in the eyes of the other children as being someone teachers feared. Not-reading, as tragic as it might become in his future, was very successful for him as a kindergartner. My job as a teacher was to get him to feel more empowered by reading than by practicing his active not-learning to read.

I developed a strategy of empowerment for Barry and didn't even bother to think about remediation. I was convinced he could learn to read perfectly well if he assented to learn how to read. The strategy was simple and involved a calculated risk. I decided to force him to read with me and then make it appear to other members of the class that he could read well, and that his past resistance was just a game he controlled. The goal was to have him show me up in class, as if his past failure was a joke he was playing on us all, and have him display to the entire class a reading ability he didn't know he had.

I prepared myself for a bit of drama. One Monday afternoon I asked Barry to come read with me. Naturally, all the other students stopped what they were doing and waited for the show. They wanted to see if Barry would be able to not-read one more time. He looked at me, then turned around and walked away. I picked up a book, went over to him, gently but firmly sat him down in a chair, and sat down myself. Before he could throw the inevitable tantrum I opened the book and said, "Here's the page you have to read. It says, 'This is a bug. This is a jug. This is a bug in the jug.' Now read it to me." He started to squirm and put his hands over his eyes. Only I could see a sly grin forming as he sneaked a look at the book. I had given him the answers, told him exactly what he had to do to show me and the rest of the class that he knew how to read all along. It was his decision: to go on playing his not-learning game or accept my face-saving gift and open up the possibility of learning to read. I offered him the possibility of entering into a teaching/learning relationship with me without forcing him to give up any of his status, and fortunately he accepted the gift. He mumbled, "This is a bug, this is a jug, this is a bug in a jug," then tossed the book on the floor, and, turning to one of the other children, said defiantly, "See, I told you I already know how to read."

This ritual battle was repeated all week and into the next, subsiding slowly as he felt that the game was no longer necessary and that he was figuring out the relationship of letters to sounds, words, and meanings. After a while, reading became just another one of the things that Barry did in class. I never did any remedial teaching or treated him as a failed reader. In fact, I was able to reach him by acknowledging his choice to not-learn and by tricking him out of it. However, if he had refused assent, there is no way I could have forced him to learn to read. That was a very important lesson to me. It helped me understand the essential role that will and free choice play in learning, and it taught me the importance of considering people's stance towards learning in the larger context of the choices they make as they create lives and identities for themselves.

Over the years I've known many youngsters who chose to actively not-learn what their school, society, or family tried to teach them. Not all of them were potential victims of their own choices to not-learn. For some not-learning was a strategy that made it possible for them to function on the margins of society instead of falling into madness or total despair. It helped them build a small, safe world in which their feelings of being rejected by family and society could be softened. Not- learning played a positive role and enabled them to take control of their lives and get through difficult times.

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Willed not-learning consists of a conscious and chosen refusal to assent to learn. It manifests itself most often in withdrawal or defiance and is not just a school-related phenomena. I recently discovered a version of a traditional religious and peace song which goes, "I ain't gonna learn war no more." Learning to make war is the opposite of learning to make peace. Many people who never learned to make war are told they must learn to make war when their nation decides to fight. During those times, pacifists and other people who choose nonviolent ways have to not-learn to make war despite strong social pressures to do so. Poor people have to not-learn despair if they are to survive. Christians have to not-learn pride and arrogance. And on the opposite end of the moral spectrum, soldiers have to not-learn to care about the lives of the "enemy," and the boss has to not-learn to care about the sufferings of fired employees. Throughout life, there may be as much occasion for not-learning as there is occasion for learning. It is uncomfortable to talk about the need to reject certain kinds of learning and reassuring to look at learning in a positive way, but without studying not-learning we can get only a partial view of the complex decisions facing people as they choose values and decide upon actions. I am just beginning to understand the importance of not-learning in the lives of children, and I urge other people to think and write about roads people choose to not- travel and how those choices define character and influence destiny.

> "Not-learning is a healthy, though frequently dysfunctional, response to racism, sexism, and other forms of bias."

In rethinking my teaching experience in the light of not-learning, I realize that many youngsters who ask impertinent questions, listen to their teachers in order to contradict them, and do not take homework or tests seriously are practiced not-learners. The quieter not-learners sit sullenly in class, daydreaming and shutting out the sound of their teacher's voice. They sometimes fall off their chairs or throw things across the room or resort to other strategies of disruption. Some push things so far that they get put in special classes or get thrown out of school. In all of these cases, the youngsters' minds are never engaged in learning what the teacher is trying to teach. On that level, no failure is possible since there has been no attempt to learn. It is common to consider such students dumb or psychologically disturbed. Conscious, willed refusal of schooling for political or cultural reasons is not acknowledged as an appropriate response to oppressive education. Since students have no way to legitimately criticize the schooling they are subjected to or the people they are required to learn from, resistance and rebellion is stigmatized. The system's problem becomes the victim's problem. However, not-learning is a healthy, though frequently dysfunctional, response to racism, sexism, and other forms of bias. In times of social movements for justice, such refusal is often turned to more positive mass protest and demonstration and to the development of alternative learning situations. For example, during the 1960s in New York, students who maintained their integrity and consciously refused the racist teachings of their segregated schools became leaders in school boycotts and teachers of reading and African American history in Freedom schools.

I've known such student leaders and have had the pleasure of working with some of them. Jamila L., the student-body president of an alternative high school I worked at during the late 1960s, told me that in the regular school she had spent four years in a special education class drinking orange juice, eating Graham Crackers, and pretending she couldn't read. The whole act was to keep from hitting several of her teachers who she knew were racist. In fact, she was an avid reader of romances and of Black history. She used special education to keep herself in school because her grandmother wanted her to graduate from high school. At our school she was a representative to the school board, helped develop projects and write proposals, and led students in a struggle against racist officers in the juvenile bureau of the local police department. Jamila was not exceptional. There are many leaders and creators hidden away in the special classes of our schools, running wild in the halls, and hanging out in the bathrooms. In 1967, the poet June Jordan asked me to introduce her to some seniors from Benjamin Franklin High School which, at that time, was the only high school in Harlem. She was writing an article (published under the name June Meyer, "You Can't See the Trees for the School," *The Urban Review*, December 1967, Vol. 2 No. 3, New York, pp. 11-15) on what these students planned to do with their futures. Two of the students were at the bottom of their class and two had done well in school. Jordan described the first two this way:

> Paul Luciano and Victor Hernandez Cruz are friends. Neither of them thinks of graduation, next January, as anything except a time of "getting out" of the school, per se. Paul regards the expected "little piece of paper" (the diploma) a proof that you have been "whitey-fied" for four years.

In the course of their conversation Paul says:

> The (school's) program is a very confusing system. There's nobody to explain it to you. They just, you know, like pat you on the back. People tell me if you don't go along with the program, you'll mess up your whole life. I say then, well, to hell with my life. You have to take some kind of stand.
>
> Everything you learn is lies.
> It's their education. Not mine.
> It's their history. Not mine.
> It's their language. Not mine.
> You name it. It's theirs. Not mine.
>
> A white teacher, he has not lived the life. He cannot relate any of the things to me. So I'm bored.

And Victor goes on a bit later:

> George Washington had slaves, man. You know one time he traded a black man for a pig? We told the librarian we wanted a picture of Malcolm X. We said we would supply our own picture and everything. But she said, "No." We wanted his picture up there with George Washington and Thomas Rickerson . . . the librarian said he preached hate. He! . . . We asked the librarian to get the Autobiography of Malcolm X. She said, "Some books you have to wait three years." It's still not there.

I wonder how many times this situation, so similar to the one portrayed over twenty years later in Spike Lee's movie *Do the Right Thing* where there is a conflict over putting up pictures of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King next to those of Italian American heroes in a neighborhood pizza parlor, has to be reenacted?

Later on in Jordan's article it turns out that both Victor and Paul were teaching reading at an education program sponsored by the Citizen's Council of Columbia University, a group that was involved in the student strike at Columbia that year. Both of them wanted to become teachers, the kind of teachers they imagined would empower students. And Victor, in one of his poems quoted in the article, expressed the feeling of most of the young people I have encountered who have chosen the route of not-learning:

> We would not be
> like flowers resting dead in some hill
> not even getting credit for its color
> or the way it smells.

In another poem written that year and published in his first volume of poetry entitled *Papo Got His Gun* (Calle Once Press, New York 1967, p. 6), Victor is much more explicit about the significance of not-learning. In talking about junior high school he writes:

> JHS was boss
> not because of what you taught me
> but because of what I learned
> which was not what you taught me

Until we learn to distinguish not-learning from failure and respect the truth behind this massive rejection of schooling by students from poor and oppressed communities, we will not be able to solve the major problems of education in the United States today. Risk-taking is at the heart of teaching well. That means that teachers will have to not-learn the ways of loyalty to the system and to speak out, as the traditional African American song goes, for the concept that everyone has a right to the tree of life. We must give up looking at resistant students as failures and instead turn a critical eye towards this wealthy society and the schools that it supports.

No amount of educational research, no development of techniques or materials, no special programs or compensatory services, no restructuring or retraining of teachers will make any fundamental difference until we concede that for many students the only sane alternative to not-learning is the acknowledgement and direct confrontation of oppression — social, sexual, and economic — both in school and in society. Education built on accepting that hard truth about our society can break through not-learning and can lead students and teachers together, not to the solution of problems but to direct intelligent engagement in the struggles that might lead to solutions.

When I am Scared of Teaching

I pulled you from the registrar's hat,
a group of twenty-five people wanting to write.

So I took roll, and talked about truth and honesty
and what we need to say to keep us alive.
I talked about one clean line after another,
and then we meditated about unfinished business.
I watched your closed lids,
watched pink tears slide down cheeks.
I brought you back and you wrote,
black pens on yellow pads.
And then you read,
and I felt myself want to curl into myself
like a snail on a wet leaf.
I wondered about Pandora and all she let loose.
I wondered how I could shove your pain into a small box, at least
long enough so I did not have to hear about your molestation, loss,
insanity, and fear. I nodded and encouraged, but I wanted to run
away from all that I dealt with before on my own path.
I stared at the woman with personality disorder until I felt
pressure behind my lids. I imagined her small body tossed
and bitten by adults who were supposed to carry her to God.
Instead, they fractured her personality into snowflakes, each
more brilliant than the next.
I watched this woman read her poem, saw her spikey hair, felt
a child run to me, pull on my leg, need me.
Somehow, I remembered, I am here to watch the path
this time, so
I held the child's hand in my heart and listened on.

Jessica Inclan, Diablo Valley College

Face to Face

Father's last years shuffle
With shorter steps.
On occasional trips
From kitchen to couch
He cane taps
A code from his spirit
That sees shapes and shadows
Through inch-thick glasses.
Mostly he faces the television
Showing a side profile
Slack without teeth:
A dim turtle
Gaping in air.

I watched his shrinking face
The whole last visit
Trying to know,
Perhaps, be known.
Warm in a cable knit, my gift,
He rarely looked at me
Or spoke. Once only
He recognized my face
Laughed and cried jumbled together:
Father and child, father and son,
Our past is darkly sealed
Somewhere in breaking molecules.

Jack Hernandez, Bakersfield College

May All Children Live as Children

BY MICHELE BENZAMIN-MASUDA

Michele Benzamin-Masuda has led retreats since 1986. She is a teacher and senior member in Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing. She holds a 4th-degree black belt in Aikido and a 3rd-degree black belt in Iaido (sword) in the style of Nishio Sensei. She is a performer and artist who has exhibited widely.

It was another weekly visit to Central Juvenile Hall in downtown Los Angeles. Mr. Russell was showing us the Special Lock Down Unit. He opened a door and I walked into one of the solitary confinement rooms. A solid door with a peephole closed behind me. A camera sat behind a protective screen above the door. In the back of the room was a tightly-screened, barred window. I stood for a moment, barely able to breathe. A sadness came over me that the staff member picked up on. "It is prison," he said. In silence I wondered how I, let alone a child, would feel locked in this room. We moved on to the monitor room, where screens showed two similar rooms occupied by small bodies wrapped up completely in sheets. They lay motionless the whole time we were there.

This unit holds the long-term residents—kids too violent or suicidal to be with others, older, high-risk offenders awaiting sentencing, and those under the Witness Protection Program. As the tour ended, Mr. Russell expressed hope that we could start a meditation project in the unit. Many members of our Ordinary Dharma Sangha now teach meditation at Central Juvenile Hall through our "Jizo Project." With other Buddhist organizations, such as International Buddhist Meditation Center and Zen Center of L.A., we work with the older high-risk offenders incarcerated for violent crimes, the girls' unit, the younger boys' unit, and occasionally, the special unit devoted to youth with misdemeanor offenses.

We have a special relationship with Harvier Stauring, the Catholic Lay Chaplain in the prison. Harvier supports our work and offers his church space to our Days of Mindfulness, peace programs, and lectures. The church is in an enclosed area in the middle of the prison—a peaceful setting for mindfulness practice. We share common goals of helping the kids be in this place, giving them choices for not returning, and especially, coping with their home life.

I am deeply moved every time I visit this facility. I have worked with a wide range of kids here, but my choice and circumstances have put me in the younger boys' unit. Mr. Russell refers to this unit as the test for all programs. "These kids need meditation the most!" he says.

The youngest boy I've worked with was eight years old — a very hyperactive, talkative, tiny boy with wide eyes and furrowed brow. He needed a lot of attention and was afraid to close his eyes during the meditation. The boy seemed so stressed for his age. I stayed with him and tried various techniques to teach him to relax. He eventually calmed down. I later learned that the day before my visit, this boy was put in solitary confinement because of the overflow in his unit, and attempted to take his life. His short life has included gangs, malnutrition, drugs, and stealing.

The general rule is not to ask the kids about their crimes. I don't need to know how they got here. When I look at them, I see children wanting desperately to be children, to be guided, make mistakes, to grow and learn, and most of all, be happy. What grounds me is to see the young boy in all of them, to talk to the part of them that desires to be a kid, do kid things, and hold kid dreams. Most of them worry about court, their families, and when they'll get out.

They all need a good night's sleep, so I teach them relaxation and lying-down medita-

tion. We also talk about anger. They get pepper-sprayed a lot in this unit because of their inability to control themselves. I teach them to stop and breathe deeply, count to ten, and see that to act out anger and get pepper-sprayed is not worth it.

Lots of the kids are in for drug use. I show them a way to get naturally high through breath, yoga, and chanting. Many miss their families, so I teach them how to visit their loved ones through a guided lovingkindness meditation they can do later on their own. Many kids are Christian, so I refer to it as a form of prayer. We discuss the Five Mindfulness Trainings, especially right speech. There are many benefits to speaking kindly or practicing silence and listening. Much of the fighting with each other and the trouble with staff comes from unskillful speech.

A visit from someone who cares can be the thread that saves a young person's life. Understanding this is what keeps me fresh and feeling undefeated by the system. Often I get only one opportunity to work with these boys, on occasion three or four times. Then, they are gone. Juvenile Halls are where kids wait for a sentence or placement. They do not serve time here, though some older ones are here a long time, sometimes years.

When I asked these young boys what are the benefits of meditation, they offered these gems. It helps you relax, focus, open your mind, pray, see your loved ones, go home, get a good night's sleep, deal with anger and sadness. And one beauty of an 11-year-old boy looked at me quite seriously and said, "It helps you get in touch with your feminine side."

I am now setting up Meditation and Peace Education programs with some local community-based organizations for probation kids and kids-at-risk during the critical after-school hours. Our youth play an integral part in the future of this planet. It is our responsibility to give them the tools to live peaceably.

When I asked these young boys what are the benefits of meditation, they offered these gems. It helps you relax, focus, open your mind, pray, see your loved ones, go home, get a good night's sleep, deal with anger.

In Search of a Teacher

BY RABBI STEVEN M. ROSMAN

Rabbi Rosman has authored a number of books, including Sidra Stories: A Torah Companion, Deena the Damselfly, *and* Spiritual Parenting: A Guide for Parents and Teachers. *Among his honors, in "December 1990 he was selected as [New York] Governor Mario Cuomo's featured storyteller at the Winter Holiday celebration at the state capital." His training includes his having "spent two years studying the healing wisdom of the world's great religious traditions to earn the degree of spiritual counselor" (quoted from the book's biographical information about the author). As the story that we've reprinted here demonstrates, he is a highly gifted storyteller who understands well the ancient maxim concerning didactic art: to wit, that art's purpose is to teach and delight.*

The next day dawned bright and warm. It was the kind of day that beckoned you to come outside and enjoy its gifts: no clouds, blue sky, brilliant sun, gentle breeze, the fragrance of flowers, and the promise of a surprise at any moment.

The Prince and Princess answered the invitation this day had extended. Today, they entered the Garden through the *Chaf Gate*. Once inside its walls, they were greeted by a surprise, just as promised.

Four strangers sat in chairs on the Garden lawn. Who were they? The Prince and Princess surely had never seen them before. Yet, how could they have entered the Garden without a key? Someone must have let them in.

The Queen called out from the other side of the lilac bush. It was she who had opened one of the gates to these strangers.

The Prince and the Princess sat down at her side, as she took her seat in the enormous wicker chair she always used when she spent time in the Garden. In moments, the Queen had introduced her children to each of the visitors. There was a soldier, a counselor, a merchant, and an old woman.

It seems the Queen wished to hire a teacher for her children. The four visitors to the Garden this morning each wanted to become the royal teacher. Each was asked to persuade the Queen why he or she would be the best choice for the children's teacher.

First to come forward was the Soldier. He swaggered several steps toward the Queen and the children, more because of the heavy medals he wore on his uniform and too many years of riding his horse than anything else. He thought his walk was impressive. The children thought it was just plain funny, and they snickered behind concealing hands.

He told the Queen of all the wars he had fought and all the battles he had won. He would make the best teacher for the Prince and Princess because he would show them how to be brave and strong.

Editor's Note: Each of the Garden's gates is signified by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In this story, the eleventh in the book, the children enter the Garden through the *Chaf* gate; *Chaf* is the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

"In Search of a Teacher" is one of twenty-two related and inter-related stories in Rabbi Steven M. Rosman's book *The Twenty-two Gates to the Garden*, "a collection of mystical tales drawn from [Jewish] kabbalistic tradition and composed for readers of all ages and backgrounds who seek lives filled with wonder, amazement, enchantment, and faith" (quoted from the book's back cover). In this story, the Queen, mother of the Prince and Princess — who are homeschooled, by the way — interviews four candidates for the job of teacher of her children. Perhaps not surprisingly, the successful candidate exhibits what many of us see as the traits of a good teacher: humility, a genuine, caring interest in the well-being of the students, and so on. Clearly attentive to the needs of her children, "The Queen watched her children. Her choice was clear."

Next, the Counselor came forward. She seemed to be looking at the sky as she approached the Queen. Actually, her eyes were pointed in that direction only because her nose stuck straight up. She was very impressed with all of the famous people she had known, and she thought the Queen would be impressed as well. The Counselor argued that she would be the best teacher for the children because she was so wise and filled with such good advice.

Then, the Merchant took his turn. He had great wealth. In fact, his pockets were filled with gold coins that clinked and clanked as he walked. Rings covered his fingers and pendants studded with jewels covered his chest. He bragged that he should be the children's teacher because he could teach them how to make much money and own many things.

Finally, it was the Old Woman's turn. She had no medals or pendants adorning her chest. She walked without a swagger or a nose pointed toward the sky. It appeared that she did not have much money, and she was not used to dining with famous people.

As she stepped forward, the Soldier took one look and began to snicker under his breath. The Counselor sneered with obvious disapproval. The Merchant simply ignored her as if she were not even there.

But the Queen addressed the Old Woman with courtesy. "Please," she invited, "tell me why it is you who should become my children's teacher."

The Prince and the Princess were very curious. What could the Old Woman say to prove that she was braver than the Soldier, wiser than the Counselor, or more wealthy than the Merchant?

"Your majesty," the Old Woman began. She looked directly into the Queen's eyes, not to challenge her but rather to meet her. "I wish to offer your children something mightier than weaponry and more enduring than medals. Ideas have toppled the mightiest of leaders, and they have inspired the meek to defeat the most decorated of soldiers. No enemy can take your ideas and values away, but he can conquer your armies and destroy your villages.

"Further, it may be true," confessed the Old Woman, "that I am not the wisest of people. But my teachers have taught me that the beginning of true wisdom lies in recognizing how much is still to be learned. Those who claim to be wise deserve only themselves as a student. There is only One who knows all. I seek that One, and I shall endeavor to share that search with your children. Along the way, perhaps we will discover together the wisdom of the One whose voice calls out even from the simplest of thornbushes.

"And finally," she admitted, "I may not have gold coins in my pocket or jewels around my neck. Yet, wisdom is a treasure even more rare than gold and even more precious than rubies. That is the treasure that interests me, and I hope to interest your children in it as well."

The Old Woman had spoken so softly that the Prince and Princess could barely hear her. Yet, they drank in her every word like a thirst-stricken wanderer who trudges across the driest desert. The Queen watched her children. Her choice was clear.

That same morning, the Prince and Princess received their first lesson from their new teacher.

Directory of Resources for Educational Alternatives

Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (ALLPIE)
P.O. Box 59
East Chatham, NY 12060-0059
518-392-6900
allpie@taconic.net

The Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education is a parent-to-parent organization which assists people who wish to be involved in their children's education — public, private and home schooling. Services include a catalog of resources, workshops and conferences, a mail-order lending library, phone consultations, and ALLPIE mailings.

Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO)
417 Roslyn Rd.
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
(800) 769-4171
http://www.edrev.org

The major clearinghouse for information, contacts, and consulting on: alternative schools of diverse types, community learning centers, home education, and international alternatives. Produces a nationally distributed radio talk show, The Education Revolution, an informative newsletter, numerous videos, and the most comprehensive directory (over 300 pages) of alternative schools and learning resources.

Antioch New England Graduate School
40 Avon St.
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-3122
http://www.antiochne.edu

Graduate programs in education include specialties in environmental education; Waldorf education; and the Integrated Day, a progressive approach that makes connections between the life of the child and the life of the classroom.

http://www.great-ideas.org/paths.htm

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
3911 Bannister Rd.
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 961-0927
http://www.waldorfeducation.org

The major organization linking Waldorf (Steiner) schools, teacher education programs, publications, and other resources. Publishes *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education.*

Association for Experiential Education
2305 Canyon Blvd., Suite 100
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 440-8844
http://www.aee.org

Promotes experiential learning in numerous settings, especially through outdoor adventure programs. Publishes books, directories, and the *Journal for Experiential Education*. Sponsors conferences.

Center for Education Reform
1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 204
Washington, D.C. 20036
(800) 521-2118
http://edreform.com

A nonprofit advocacy group supporting fundamental reforms in schools, with an emphasis on high academic standards, more parental choice, and greater local control. Provides numerous resources on charter schools, including research, state-by-state reports, and materials for planning new programs. Offers a comprehensive database on educational reform and several publications including *The Education Forum*.

The Center for Inspired Learning
http://www.inspiredinside.com/learning

A website created to help people connect with other people and ideas related to more holistic and community-based forms of learning. Contains links to pages describing different types of schools, a library of reflective articles, and more.

Down to Earth Books
P.O. Box 163
Goshen, MA 01032
http//www.crocker.com/~maryl/index.html

Publisher and online bookstore specializing in education, psychology, spirituality, poetry and other topics. Titles include back issues of *SKOLE* (the journal of alternative education that preceded Paths of Learning) and the three volume *Challenging the Giant: The Best of SKOLE*, along with *Making it Up as We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School*, and *Real Education: Varieties of Freedom*, a book from Great Britain not readily available in the U.S. Website also features reviews and articles.

EnCompass
11011 Tyler Foote Rd.
Nevada City, CA 95960
(530) 292-1000

A non-profit, holistic learning center dedicated to the psychological and emotional health of children and families. EnCompass teaches and models the NLR (Natural Learning Rhythms) approach developed by Ba and Josette Luvmour through an integrated program of workshops, classes, internships, retreats, Family Camps, Outdoor Education, special programs, conferences and publications.

Genius Tribe
P.O. Box 1014
Eugene, OR 97440-1014
(541) 686-2315

A mail order library for unschoolers, homeschoolers, and other people committed to education in the fullest, freest, most joyful sense of the word. Book and resource reviews by Grace Llewellyn, author of *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*.

Goddard College
Plainfield, VT 05667
(802) 454-8311
http://www.goddard.edu

Graduate program in teacher education emphasizes alternative, progressive, and holistic approaches. All graduate as well as undergraduate programs regard each student as a unique individual in charge of his or her own learning.

Great Ideas in Education/Holistic Education Press
P.O. Box 328
Brandon, VT 05733-0328
(800) 639-4122
http://www.great-ideas.org

Publisher and distributor of books in the areas of holistic and progressive education and the journal *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*. A partner with the Foundation for Educational Renewal (publisher of *Paths of Learning*).

Growing Without Schooling
Holt Associates
2380 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 104
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 864-3100
http://www.holtgws.com

GWS is a bimonthly newsletter linking homeschooling families, filled with resources, information, and personal stories. Holt Associates offers consultations; sponsors an annual conference; and publishes the catalog John Holt's Bookstore, containing tools and ideas for independent learning.

Heinemann
361 Hanover St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912
(800) 793-2154
http://www.heinemann.com

Publisher of numerous titles on whole language approaches to literacy and other student-centered methods of teaching, including several excellent books on alternative education. Titles include *Making it Up as We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School* by Chris Mercogliano, *One Size Fits Few: The Folly of Educational Standards* by Susan Ohanian, and *Round Peg, Square Hole* by John Gust.

Tell your Librarian
About
Paths of Learning

Home Education Magazine
P.O. Box 1083
Tonasket, WA 98855
(800) 236-3278
http://www.home-ed-magazine.com

Published since 1983 by a second-generation homeschooling family, this is an in-depth and well balanced general interest homeschool magazine. Ten columnists and over a dozen feature articles in every 68-page issue. *H.E.M.* website offers an extensive online library of articles; a database; discussion forums; and more, including the American Homeschool Association, a nonprofit networking and service organization with a newsletter, writers' clearinghouse, and information on home education laws in all 50 states. See http://www.home-ed-magazine.com/AHA/aha.html.

John Dewey Project
on Progressive Education
535 Waterman Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405
(802) 656-1355

A policy research institute promoting ideas such as justice, equity, human development, creativity, care, ethics and community in public discussion of educational issues. Publishes studies and position papers, sponsors conferences and forums.

Jola Publications
2933 N. 2nd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55411
(612) 529-5001

Publishes the periodical *Public School Montessorian* and an annual *Montessori Community Directory*, a comprehensive listing of hundreds of schools across the U.S., as well as organizations, teacher education centers, publications, materials suppliers, and other resources for Montessori education.

Alfie Kohn
http://www.AlfieKohn.org

A useful website featuring articles, books, videos, and lectures on teaching and parenting by Alfie Kohn, one of today's most astute observers of schooling. (His best-selling titles include *No Contest* and *Punished by Rewards.*) Also lists national and state by state resources and contact people to build a campaign against the educational standards movement.

National Association for Core Curriculum
1640 Franklin Ave., Suite 104
Kent, OH 44240
(330) 677-5008

Promotes integrative, interdisciplinary studies, team teaching, block scheduling, and other learning-centered approaches. A network of innovative educators influenced by the principles of progressive education. Newsletter lists conferences, resources, research support for these methods.

National Coalition of Alternative
Community Schools
1266 Rosewood, #1
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 668-9171
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8187/ncacs.htm

NCACS is a non-profit network of schools, groups and individuals committed to participant control, whereby students, parents, and staff create and implement their own learning programs. NCACS sponsors a directory and other publications, conferences, exchanges, accreditation, and alternative teacher education.

National Coalition of Education Activists
P.O. Box 679
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
ncea@aol.com

NCEA is a multi-racial network of parents, school staff, and others involved in public school issues. Its purpose is to promote a progressive and equitable vision of public education and to help local activists acquire the information, skills, and support they need to make this vision a reality.

National Community Education Association
3929 Old Lee Highway, #91A
Fairfax, VA 22042
(703) 359-8973
http://www.ncea.com

Supports schools (primarily public schools) and community leaders working to provide expanded learning opportunities in response to individual and community needs. After school and extended day programs, social services, alternative schools, and lifelong learning approaches are among the models promoted. Based on principles of local control and self-determination. Publishes books and other materials.

New Horizons for Learning
P.O. Box 15329
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 547-7936
http://www.newhorizons.org

An online resource for educators concerned with the fullest development of human capabilities. Explores ideas not yet in mainstream educational practice. Online journal, books and other materials, networking for people and organizations.

Northeast Foundation for Children
71 Montague City Rd.
Greenfield, MA 01301
(800) 360-6332
http://responsiveclassroom.org

A nonprofit organization providing workshops, consulting, publications, and other resources dedicated to the improvement of K-8 teaching. Strong emphasis on the social context of learning and understanding of children's development. "Responsive Classroom" approach has been used successfully in hundreds of schools

Rethinking Schools
1001 E. Keefe Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(800) 669-4192
http://www.rethinkingschools.org

An activist publication for teachers, parents, and students concerned with urban education. Views classrooms as "places of hope" and empowerment. Also publishes books and resources on particular topics.

Zephyr Press
P.O. Box 66006
Tucson, AZ 85728-6006
(800) 232-2187
http://www.zephyrpress.com

Publishes books exploring "new ways of teaching for all ways of learning", including: multiple intelligences, brain based learning, and integrated curriculum. Sponsors workshops and an annual conference.