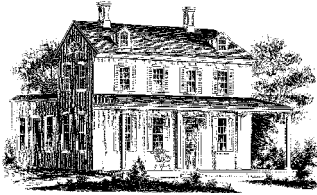




THE SCHOOL BULL

Informal news about The Clearwater School



Site Update

Stephanie Sarantos

This fall many of us have been involved in a tumultuous search for a new home for the school site. Early in the school year we convened a meeting of the Board

of Trustees to discuss purchasing property where we could build a permanent home for The Clearwater School. Out of that meeting began a journey towards purchasing a home with acreage in the Seattle area. We came close to buying a beautiful piece of property. The owners were anxious to sell to us, and patient enough to accept our offer that was contingent on obtaining the needed permits and zoning. During November I had dreams that I would be able to announce the date of our move in this newsletter. Unfortunately, in December we discovered that we would not be able to meet the zoning and permitting requirements necessary to change the use of the property from a private residence to a school. We expressed our appreciation to the owners of the home and sadly removed our offer.

The task of finding a new and, we hope, more permanent site for the school continues to challenge us and consume much of our energy. We have discovered that the zoning and permit requirements vary in different municipalities, and can be very stringent and expensive to meet. We are beginning to question whether we will be able to find a private home that we can afford to change into a school. We are now discussing options for leasing space from other institutions and exploring the idea of buying land and building a school from scratch. We are anxious for all and any advice and assistance in our quest for a home.

I want to personally acknowledge the work of the many Assembly members who have helped in our search. Many of you have taken time to visit property on very short notice and attend meetings to make decisions about whether to try to purchase the properties. We have many skilled individuals in our group that have contributed many hours to exploring the requirements and possibilities of buying a place. I would also like to thank those of you who have called with leads for available space. **If you have any leads for a location or would like to help the search committee please call me: Stephanie Sarantos at 206.364.9711.** 🐮



Lauren, Amanda and Hailey

The Adjustment to Democracy - One Parent's Story.

Mary deRosas

I'll never forget one of my first experiences as a parent at The Clearwater School. At the time my 2 boys attended the school. My older boy was 8 and my younger one was 4. From the start I had my doubts about the school. In retrospect, I can see I was fearful of losing control in their lives. But my older boy loved it, so I was willing to give it a try.

One of their first afternoons at school, my younger boy came running up to me, sobbing. He was so distressed he could not speak. He insisted on leaving. Later in the day the whole story came out. Some other kids had refused to play with him and had called him names. I felt a surge of maternal anger. "What kind of a school is this", I fumed, "giving children the freedom to hurt other children with impunity?" I wanted to pull both boys out right then, but decided instead to talk with a friend on the staff about what happened.

As it turned out, I did not have a complete understanding of the school rules. I did not see the protective freedoms the school had to offer. Yes, students at The Clearwater School can choose not to play with someone. They can make that choice for themselves. However, they must treat each other respectfully. Calling names is against the rules. My son or I could have written a complaint against the students in question and the Judicial Committee would decide what action to take.

The success of the Clearwater School and all Sudbury schools rests on the principle of respect: respect for all school members and the rules they have developed for running the school. I realized that I had never forced my children to play with someone they didn't want to play with, much to the dismay of some friends and relatives. However, my husband and I did insist that they be respectful and kind. I realized that our family rules were the same as the school's in this area. As an adult in the situation I had the opportunity to remind the kids involved about their rights and responsibilities.

Continued on page 5

Contents

Site Update	1
The Adjustment to Democracy - One Parent's Story.	1
A Kid's Life Without Play	2
An Interview with Alan White	2
Thoughts on the Evaluation Frenzy	3
What We've Been Doing	3
My Poems	4
Lost and Found - A True Story	4
If You Go Fishing	4
Family Information Nights at The Clearwater School	5
Wish List	6
Please send me enrollment information	6
The Clearwater School 1998-1999 School Year Calendar	6

A Kid's Life Without Play

Copyright 1998, The Seattle Times Company. Reprinted with permission from the editorial pages of December 5, 1998

Hold that practice whistle, soccer moms and dads. Overbooking kids, scheduling children for every activity you wish you had tried as a youngster, may seem like good parenting, but many parents overdo it.

Reasearchers at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research compiled time diaries last year for 3,500 children ages 12 and under and discovered leisure time has declined significantly the past 17 years.

Of course, it makes sense to get today's littlest couch potatoes out of the house to run off energy. It's smart, too, to invest time and money to nurture the next generation of Count Basies and Martha Grahams.

An after-school and weekend schedule with almost every hour booked with activities may look like success. Yet, such overscheduling misses something terribly important: free unstructured play.

"Play is the most powerful way a child explores the world and learns about himself," T. Berry Brazelton, pediatrician at Harvard Medical School and author of several parenting books, told Time magazine.

Play encourages independent thinking and helps children learn how to get along with others. Kids today are so overbooked they only have an average 12 hours a week to engage in this important play. And, Braselton says, "If we don't pay attention to this, we're going to create obsessive-compulsive people."

If we don't slow down, we're going to create a generation of people who know how to sit in traffic and be busy but don't know what to do with themselves in the quiet spaces of their lives. 🐕



The School Bull - Volume 5.1

The School Bull is published whenever Bob Freeman darn well feels like it. You want something to go in? Let him know: 206-783-3161 hm 206-217-7030 wk; 111 NW 59th St., Seattle, WA 98107 bf@seanet.com. Thanks to Shawna Lee for her proofreading.

The Clearwater School

206-364-9711, 11748 Lakeside Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125, shawna@seanet.com

Welcomes racial, cultural, and religious diversity, and families of every composition.

President	Martha Hurwitz
Treasurer	Louanne Cole
Secretary	Stephanie Sarantos

Board of Directors

Mary deRosas	Elizabeth Peckham	Julia Henry
Annie Akin	Bob Freeman	Trish Fabritz
Guy Peckham	Shawna Lee	



An Interview with Alan White

By Jacquie Werner-Gavrin

Reprinted with permission from Red Cedar School News, Fall/Winter 1998

I met Alan White three years ago while attending a summer workshop at Sudbury Valley School. Alan has been a longtime friend of Sudbury Valley and has spent recent years helping new Sudbury schools develop. I enjoyed reading this interview in the Red Cedar School News and thought his perspective might provide both historical wisdom and insightful understanding of the Sudbury philosophy. I hope you will find it inspiring as well.

Stephanie Sarantos.

Alan first met the founders of Sudbury in 1967, when the school was about to get off the ground. Alan was a principal of a local school in Massachusetts at the time. He went on to become an assistant superintendent and a superintendent of schools. As he watched the "experiment" at Sudbury unfold, he became increasingly supportive, to the point that he eventually left his career in education because he was so impressed by the success of Sudbury and so discouraged by the problems in mainstream education. Over the years, Alan's involvement with Sudbury has included being a trustee, president of the Assembly and, for one year, a staff member. The following is an interview with Jacquie Werner-Gavrin which took place with Alan during his visit to Red Cedar School.

JWG: When you first met the Sudbury people, what was it that attracted your curiosity?

Alan: I really was searching for some way to make the public system of education work better. I had been involved in many innovations, including working on the new math, new science, team teaching, and after a while it became obvious we weren't changing anything significant. I'd always felt that the only proper place for experiment was private schools; any private experiment that failed, we'd learn a lot from it. In the public school setting, parents and children had no choice what school they went to. If you start an experiment and are forcing parents to be part of something they don't understand and support, you're being irresponsible and are dooming the project to failure. I wanted to encourage experimentation because I felt all programs which held promise worked well for the top 20% and were notoriously unsuccessful for the rest.

When I met the founders, I was impressed with the interesting depth of the group and captivated by the kinds of things they were saying. They were saying things like "children are naturally curious" and "children, when motivated to learn, learn very quickly" and those were statements that were in my experience. What you find with children who are successful in school, they do learn very quickly. You get a lot of credit from parents for this, when in fact it's very easy to present things to kids who are focusing in and are interested. They were saying a number of other things, including how remarkable children are in the learning they do in the first four years before they come to school, which was also in my experience.

JWG: Were you skeptical about the Sudbury idea?

Alan: I wasn't sure it would work. I hoped it would work, but by that point in my career, I'd had my hopes raised by program after program. So, I had my reservations.

At the beginning, we thought the kids would all eventually ask for classes, ask to be taught. My expectation was that they'd play a while, and then get interested in history or science or math. I never really worried that children

Continued on page 5

Thoughts on the Evaluation Frenzy

Stephanie Sarantos

Lately there have been several newspaper articles about the pressure that young people and their parents experience in meeting the requirements of school. This pressure begins as early as kindergarten and continues through college. Recently I saw this headline in the New York Times: "As Parents Sweat, 4th Graders Cram for New Test." In the article, I learned of parents in New York State paying tutors \$30-\$50 per hour to prepare their fourth grade children to take a new standardized English test. I learned of The Princeton Review, a company that has long published test preparation materials for college-oriented exams and has now moved into the market of preparation materials for state exams. John Katzman, president of The Princeton Review, said that his company has long believed that they would expand their role from test prep materials into work that would help mainstream education. Now, he said, the company joke is: **"We don't have to, because mainstream ed has moved into test prep. These tests really are going to wag the dog."**

Many educational leaders, teachers and parents share concerns that standardized testing holds a central focus in school. Most believe that preparing for and taking standardized tests will teach our children how to attain higher test scores—but not necessarily contribute to their education. I have always been an excellent test taker: yet I bet the scores on my California Achievement Tests taken in grade school were very similar to my GRE test scores. Does the similarity in scores mean that I learned nothing during all those years in school. I hope I learned something between those two experiences—but I wonder if the tests really measured my knowledge and thinking abilities, or my test-taking skills.

I know that part of the reason for the "New Standardized Tests" is to improve the ability to measure higher level thinking skills rather than just a rote set of facts. The New York tests are similar to the new Washington State standardized achievement tests in this goal. Not long ago I spoke to a young friend who was afraid that she and her friends would not be able to move on

to fifth grade unless they scored well on the fourth grade tests. I do not know if any schools have actually adopted this procedure, but I heard the strength of my friend's fear. And I know that a climate of anxiety and fear is not conducive to learning. When we are afraid, we often limit the amount of information we can take in, develop doubts in our abilities and limit our curiosity and creative drive for exploration.

Will preparing for and taking these tests help students to become creative adults who are capable of meeting the complex challenges their lives will bring? Will fourth grade test takers learn to love what they are learning? Will they gain self initiative to define and pursue their own interests? Will fourth grade test takers learn how to evaluate the worth of their own efforts—to judge whether they meet their own goals for success? Or will fourth grade test takers internalize a state of fear and anxiety about learning and achievement? Will fourth graders learn to label themselves according to their scores on standardized tests? Will children who develop at a slower pace begin to doubt their own abilities and will children who develop at a faster pace feel out of place?

The ability to explore, to question, to follow a hunch and take the risk of failure lead to a life-long love of learning. For so many of us, deep and lasting learning often results from initial failures—on projects, on problems and in relationships of all kinds. A focus on testing—no matter how well intentioned—does not promote high regard for failure. Alfie Kohn who has written about the dangers of rewards as well as punishments speaks of the "constructivist" model of learning. He says:

"Children . . . are active meaning makers, testing out theories and trying to make sense of themselves and the world around them. Learning comes from discovering surprising things—perhaps from grappling with a peer's different perspective—and feeling the need to reformulate one's own approach. It entails playing with words and numbers and ideas, coming to understand these things from the inside out and making them one's own. Skills are acquired in the course of arriving at that deep and personal understanding, and in the context of seeking answers to one's own questions."

Kohn's views affirm the Sudbury model of education practiced at The Clearwater School. Every day I am grateful that I can witness the power of learning that comes when children are free from any pressure of tests and comparisons—learning that comes when children are free to devise their own standards of evaluation. I see children who develop at their own pace and gain trust in their capabilities. I see students who love what they are doing, be it division problems practiced in the attic, conversing with friends or becoming certified to use the sewing machine. At The Clearwater School students are not categorized or labeled according to their scores on tests. This is not to say that students are not recognized for their abilities, skills and talents. We all note the special talents of our friends and colleagues. At school we all ask for assistance from each other. We turn to the people who have special talents to teach us or help us accomplish a task. We learn from people who have more experience at a given task or game all the time. And we develop admiration for those who excel in different areas.

When we are free to follow our own learning we naturally evaluate ourselves. We know inside when we have accomplished our goal and we learn that our goals may change in the process of learning. We know when we have more work to do in order to gain a skill. And we learn that our internal drive to excel is so powerful that we will at times work very hard to gain even a small amount of progress. The ability to measure one's own progress feels to me like a more natural kind of "evaluation." I believe that students who learn to understand their unique process of thinking, feeling and problem solving can not help but develop a deep love of learning and an ever-expanding knowledge of their own abilities. This is the healthiest way I can imagine to prepare our children for the challenges that lie ahead. 🐾

What We've Been Doing . . .

The days at The Clearwater School seem to fly by! We thought our readers would like to know some of the ways we spend our time. . .

- sewing on our newly donated sewing machine
- ice skating
- swimming
- making Christmas cookies
- organizing an acting class
- playing "Nine Men's Morris"
- playing computer games
- having an auction of lost and found items
- walking to the beach
- cleaning litter off the beach
- riding bikes to the beach
- volunteering to serve on JC
- attending JC and school meeting
- spending a day making a maze
- making Halloween costumes
- planning a Halloween party
- having a Halloween party
- cleaning up the Halloween party
- disassembling the maze from the Halloween party
- paper mache
- making paper
- making and selling drawings
- sewing pouches
- playing spoons
- playing on the trapeze
- playing Mancala
- jumping rope
- singing
- organizing a riding club
- creating and selling ink tattoos
- reading
- role-playing games
- walking to J.P.'s Market
- walking to Fred Meyer
- playing Star Wars Monopoly
- making braids
- beanie babies
- hanging out and talking
- fixing and eating lunch together
- doing math
- playing Dungeon
- and much more!

As you see from reading this list of activities, the kids at The Clearwater School do a lot of playing. See page two for another educator's perspective on the importance of play for children. "Play" will be the topic of our March Family Information Night. Please come, and if you'd like to schedule a visiting day call 364-9711 or 783-3161.

My Poems

Zelina McCaffrey - Age 7

Friends

Friends are friends.
 Friends are friends.
 So don't break up if you're friends
 So friends are friends.
 Friends are friends.
 Friends are friends.



Animals and Humans

Fish are made to swim.
 Birds are made to fly.
 But most of all I think you should know
 That humans are made to love one another.



Flowers

Lilies are yellow.
 Tulips are blue.
 Lilies are also
 Red, white and blue.
 And pink, green, white and red.

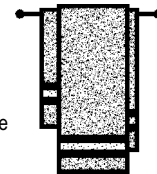


Untitled

The eagle glides.
 The bird flies.
 The fish swims.
 And Mother Nature sings her song.

Towels

Towels are dry.
 The lake is wet.
 So I put a towel in the lake
 And now the towel is...
 wet - hee hee.



If you go fishing by Zelina McCaffrey

If you go fish-ing you might catch a fish But when you do when your
 line is in the wa - ter You don't know what kind of fish it is
 So don't bet on it, So... it
 (Repeat from the beginning)

Lost and Found - A True Story

Claire Peckham - Age 7

I came home and when my dad came he took me. When we did get home I wanted to show him my new Beanie and I couldn't find him. My dad suggested calling Shawna. She looked in her car and found my Beanie, and my lunch napkin.

The End.



Interview with Alan White

Continued from page 2

who would follow their own interests, to the apparent exclusion of the rest of the curriculum, would be handicapped. If you get into music, it's not long before you get into the history of music, and if you want to be a musician you're dealing with bargaining and contract negotiation, dealing with lawyers and accountants, traveling, organizing. So even if it starts on a narrow basis, it isn't long before you're into many fields of endeavor.

But what actually happened at Sudbury was that very few kids actually requested classes. It wasn't successful in the way we hoped it would be. My apprehension and anxiety began to build and I thought, it's not going to work.

Although it was not working the way they thought it would, the founders held firm. They felt the basis was valid: children were curious, children wanted to grow up to be effective adults, children in the early years had an unbelievable talent for solving extremely difficult problems. They were unclear as to how it would unfold, but were certain their philosophy was consistent with the basic nature of children.

JWG: When did your doubts begin to change?

Alan: After the first two years, the first group of students were leaving the school. One of the big concerns that I had was, given the kind of program at SVS, these kids might never be able to get a job or get into college. It would be one thing if they'd been doing a lot of math and science, etc. But to my amazement, these kids were getting into college. And they were getting into "good" colleges, Yale and other Ivy league schools, Bennington, Oberlin, schools I respected.

My next question was, they got in, but will they survive? All the feedback coming in was, they're doing just fine.

I was doing lots of reading, trying to understand what the heck was happening. With each year that went by we were getting kids who missed the last three—then the last four—years of high school, then kids who didn't do any secondary school. With each year that went by, the school was getting this tremendous feedback. Obviously the students were "getting it" without the regular courses. I began to gain more confidence in what was happening.

And we were seeing, not every one should be going to college, some people should just be going straight into careers. And these kids were doing really well too.

JWG: How about the kids who spent their entire school years at Sudbury?

Alan: Eventually we had students who went all the way through. They spent their time at school hanging out, talking, playing, playing in the woods. They all learned to read, learning in two or three months from the time they decided to learn. The first ones to spend their entire time at Sudbury were staff kids, and every one of them is spectacular in how well they are doing.

In case after case, if you use university as a criterion (I think we'll eventually let go of the importance of college like we have high school), the kids who didn't go to any other school did very well after leaving Sudbury. I was highly motivated to understand what was going on. How could children who basically spent their childhood playing and talking do so well beyond school, even by the most conservative standards?

JWG: How do you make sense of it now?

Alan: I believe we've denigrated the role of play in our culture. Play is the way nature has prepared human species to get from birth to adulthood. It's the way of imagining how to be an adult, how things work. The more you're allowed to engage in unfettered play, to play around with ideas, the more you're able to get feedback and can keep modifying your conceptions. Children decide what they're interested in, then figure out how to get there. Play is the best they can do to approximate what it's really like. They keep refining and perfecting insights as they grow. Through talking to others, to adults, they gain sharper and sharper focus. They persist at working at this until they have a fundamental understanding.

Another very important thing is conversation. In most schools, kids do little

talking. Conversation is essential. It's part of developing your own feedback system. Students having control over their own lives is also critical. Knowing that you're in control of your own life, you're not just passive, having to wait for someone to tell you what to do. Staff are aware of the importance of not interfering. They wait until kids say, "Can you help me?"

JWG: If this idea is so successful, why aren't more schools doing it?

Alan: For the first 20 years at Sudbury, it was like being in the wilderness, no one paid attention. I can't tell you how exciting it was when schools like The Circle School and Red Cedar started.

I think that the reality of the world we're growing into predisposes these schools to be successful. However, my generation and yours are steeped in the culture of a previous time. It may mean we have to wait for another generation . . . I am convinced that in one form or another, schools will eventually differ dramatically from how they now are. 🐮

Family Information Nights at The Clearwater School

The Clearwater School hosts monthly Family Information Nights for anyone interested in knowing more about the school. Here's the schedule.

- Thurs., Jan 14 - Character Education at Sudbury Schools
- Mon., Feb 8 - How Freedom in Sudbury Schools Produces Self-Initiated Students
- Tues., Mar 9 - The importance of Play in a Child's Education
- Wed., Apr 7 - topic to be announced
- Thurs., May 6 - topic to be announced

These informal information nights are held at the school from 7-9 pm. Kids are welcome and light refreshments are served. Students, staff, and parents of The Clearwater School are available to answer your questions. Please call to register at 364-9711 or 783-3161. We look forward to seeing you. 🐮

Adjustment to Democracy

Continued from page 1

My fears of the school degenerating into a Lord of the Flies scenario (a question frequently raised at our Family Information Nights), slowly receded. It never happened. The rules of the school and the commitment that students and staff have to enforce them would not allow that to happen. Democratic education guarantees its success by giving students and staff equal say in how the school is run. The kids here are invested because they have participated in creating the school.

Slowly, I grew more comfortable with the freedoms my children had as members of the school. I observed my children. I listened to them. School was sometimes challenging and sometimes difficult for them, but they were excited about school and looked forward to school days. I grew in my trust in the school as I grew in my trust in my children to choose how to spend their days. When they were babies, toddlers, and then preschoolers, I followed their lead and trusted their ability to know what they wanted. I could find no evidence that this way of allowing older kids to be in the world was harmful. For our family, it was a natural progression from how we had raised them when they were younger. It was often my own fears of not meeting current educational expectations that prevented me from seeing this reality.

As a parent I've made a lot of changes and adjustments since my children began attending Clearwater. The whole experience has greatly helped me clarify my own values. The fact is that most families do not run as democratically as the school. I think that's good. But the ideas my kids learn at school about democracy make for very interesting and provocative dinner conversation - and often for changes in how we do things in our family. Mostly, I am grateful my children have the opportunity to choose for themselves the pursuits that matter most to them - even if it's just "playing" all day. I can't think of any better way for them to discover who they are and how they want to be in the world. 🐮

Wish List

We, like so many other non-profits, have items that we could use. Here is our list. And remember if you don't have something on our list, you can always write us a check!

- A new site: "Home-like" setting with large outdoor area.
- Tai Chi instructor to donate 1-2 hours of instruction per week
- Cream of Tartar
- Paints
- Sheets (for making forts)
- New video game system
- Boards and cinder blocks (temporary shelving)
- Scissors for art and sewing
- Pins and needles
- Seam Ripper
- Fabric
- Iron and ironing board
- Blender
- 2 or 3 desk chairs
- Computer games for a Macintosh (on floppy disks—not cd-rom)
- CDROM drive for MAC
- Up to date Multimedia/Internet capable PC
- Clay
- Chess/Checkers set



Please send me enrollment information

Send this coupon to **TCS Enrollment Info, 11748 Lakeside Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98125**, if you would like information about enrolling your child at The Clearwater School

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Numbers: _____

The Clearwater School 1998-1999 School Year Calendar

February 1999

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 1999

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 1999

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 1999

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 1999

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

hours of operation: 9am-5pm
 February 15 – President's Day
 March 1-5 – Midwinter Break
 April 26-30 – Spring Break
 May 31 – Memorial Day
 June 10 – Last day of school

The Clearwater School
 111 NW 59th Street
 Seattle WA 98107-2032

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 SEATTLE, WA
 PERMIT NO 475