



Edge Hill Country School

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Newsletter: September 2010



News from the Board



Diane Ferguson
Chair, Board of Directors
Welcome to the new and returning families and faculty. There has been a great deal of work behind the scenes this summer to get ready for the year.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Thank you to Marc Fortin for your leadership in getting the Kindergarten ready with a new roof, fresh floor, and fresh paint. As well, Marc Fortin and Mike McKelvey were responsible for the majority of work on the office floor and the new kitchen in the main schoolhouse. All will be well used and well loved! Liza McIntosh led a work bee in August and Lise Gunby led the clean up and re-organization of the front building after all the renovation work.

FUNDRAISING

A contra dance was held on July 3rd, led by May Tettero. Blues in the Barn, led by myself, was held in August at Glencolton Farms. Thank you to Shane McGivern for printing the school handbooks. Thank you to Marc and Marie-Eve for your work on the calendars.

BOARD AND FACULTY

The board, faculty and hiring committee met several times over the summer to ensure we had the right mix of teachers to students and to prepare for the coming year.

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped in all these efforts!



Botany study in the Maher fern garden on Concession 2-3 (from left): Daniel Mustapha, Tessie Bainborough, and Lyjah Mellor. Behind: Mackenzie Anderson and Malcolm Bainborough. The fern garden, which gathers many examples of Grey-Bruce ferns under its canopy, was created 30 years ago by Nels Maher and family, and is maintained by Jean Maher. Thank you to our neighbours for their support of learning at Edge Hill School.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be Thursday, October 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the schoolhouse. Last year's financials, this year's budget, and a review of the prior year are part of the AGM's function. As well, board members are nominated and voted on. Two board positions are up for (re)election.

BOARD MEETING

The next board meeting will be held Thursday, September 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the main school building. If you have a specific issue you would like addressed at any board meeting, please forward in writing to myself (chair) for inclusion on the agenda.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

September 23

Pizza Thursday

We will be firing up the adobe oven and making pizza! The first of a bi-weekly activity and small fundraiser put on by the Early Childhood group will be September 23rd after school. All welcome!

Wednesday, September 29

Michaelmas celebration at the school, 2 p.m.
Parents and friends welcome.

Thursday, September 30

Board of Directors meeting, at the school

Friday, October 1

Shantoshram Curry Dinner

A fundraiser for the school to help inaugurate the new kitchen; featuring organic and locally grown food. Two sittings: 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 14

Edge Hill School Annual General Meeting

Truth, Beauty, and Goodness: watch for the scheduling (on Sunday afternoons) of a sequence of adult workshops featuring the visual and written arts. Primary contact: Leigh Mellor; secondary contact: Lise Gunby

Summer of 2010

Volunteering Thank You

by Marc Fortin

Board Member, Building and Maintenance

It has been an exciting summer full of serendipitous happenings, one thing flowed into another, many people took part, and many wonderful things were accomplished.

The Edge Hill community has a wonderful variety of people, each with his or her own special way of contributing to the well-being of the school. I have had the honour of seeing many of them in action. I hope the families of

the people named here also take some credit, for when someone is away from home, indeed the entire family is contributing.

The Kindergarten building got a good deal of attention early in the summer: the contents of the building were completely emptied, the floor was sanded, everything was cleaned, the floor was refinished, and the walls were painted just in time for Mike and Philly with their children Cleo and Nathan to move in for the summer. Then before school began all the contents were replaced. Thank you to PJ, Deb, Will, Doug, Bob, Mike M., Jen, Marie-Eve, Leigh, Lyjah, Liza, Kailey, Ben and Odin.

Let's back up a bit: as the last coat was being applied to the floor, a wicked storm came with heavy rain and a few drops of water landed on the new floor; upon closer inspection it was decided the roof's shingles needed replacing. We informed Mike and Philly that there would be a bit of noise for a couple of days; they were very accepting and offered to help. Luckily for the school's budget for roof re-shingling (zero), Doug and Laura had a stack of shingles that happened to match the previous ones, with a box of nails to add. The old shingles got peeled off and old trailers hauled them away. Working with black shingles in July must be similar to standing in front of a barbecue in the desert; did I mention it was hot? The roof got done, everyone survived, and tar is really sticky - not to be applied with hands. Thank you to David, Mike M., Lynn, Mike D., Rob L., Shane, Simon M., Rob E., Markus and Michael.

During their stay Mike and Philly helped immensely with the grounds of the school by removing vines from the windows, moving topsoil, planting grass, cutting grass and keeping an eye on everything. Thank you for your generosity.

The front building has seen many changes in recent years, with the foyer and washrooms completely redone, the main room repainted, and a new floor installed, minus the office, because all the contents of the main room were

in there at the time. Now was as good a time as any and so the office was emptied, the floor installed and things went back. It's that simple, especially when you have these people to thank. **Thank you to** Lynn, Simon M., Ken, Robin, Emma, Lise, Mike M., Jen, Ben, Kailey, and Liza.

Happening at the same time was a project meant to be completed last year: the kitchen. What started out as an extended weekend project turned into the chance to build a kitchen so amazing, so fantabulous, that it would survive a Grade 4-5 class: the test has begun. Many hours were spent contemplating a sheet of plywood and some detail that no one will see unless you're cleaning behind the stove. We should have had T-shirts made to remind us "we are building a kitchen, not a piano." Besides having fun there was cutting, gluing, nailing, painting, removing the old kitchen and contents and putting things all back in the new one, just in time for the bell to ring. Thank you to Mike M., Will, Che, David, Jen, Robin, Emma, Lise, Ben, Kailey, and Liza, and to Philly for her timely advice.

Time was spent cleaning the grounds and people were seen on hands and knees weeding beds, moving rocks, clearing branches, mowing the lawn, and enjoying the day. Thank you to Liza, Christine, Lisa, Ray, Che, PJ, Bob, David, and Rosemary.

We can't call the kindergarten building the "back building" anymore. There is a new structure peering around the corner, a beautiful timber-frame shelter with joinery so precise you would think it made from a single massive block of wood. Thank you to PJ and Joshua.

Volunteering is caring and selfless. It is believing your actions will benefit others. It's tough, sometimes sweaty. It's energizing and good food for the soul. As a parent I'd like to thank the teachers and all volunteers doing their varied tasks which keep the school running smoothly.

Wish list

Firewood for kindergarten
Large scoop and slide style snow shovel
Pea gravel for pathways
Contact Marc at 519-986-4758

Mike M. will be handling the weekly maintenance/cleaning of specified areas such as boot rooms and washrooms in all buildings. The students and teachers care for their own classrooms and we can each do our part to help if we also consider ourselves custodians of the school. If something needs attention in or around the school please let Mike or Marc know. For items that can't find their owner, there is now a lost and found box in the shed (white door) and hooks for lost and wet items.

A unique and enormous thank you to Marc Fortin from all school families and friends. Marc appears to have spent his summer virtually full-time at Edge Hill. Amazing!

Excerpt:

Richard Louv has coined the term "nature deficit disorder" after spending ten years interviewing parents and children about their experiences in nature, in both rural and urban areas. He compared their anecdotes with a growing body of research that suggests children who are given early and positive exposure to nature thrive in intellectual, spiritual, and physical ways that their "shut-in" peers do not. Louv links a lack of interaction with nature to a slow but steady erosion of mental, physical, and spiritual health . . . *Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*

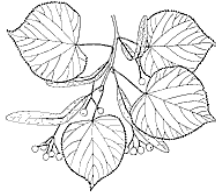
REMINDER to parents and visitors

Edge Hill is a peanut and tree-nut free school. Please be mindful in preparing lunches and take care to come to school with clean hands and face after a nutty breakfast. Please check snacks or crafts.

Class News

Linden Kindergarten

Marie-Eve Perreault



September in the Linden Kindergarten is about orchards and apples, horses and knights as we approach Michaelmas with our capes of gold and stars so bright.

We are living into the story of The Stone Soup, told at story time, by making our very own stone soup on Mondays for Tuesday's snack. We also look forward this week to harvesting the potatoes and onions of the soup garden that last year's Morning Star Kindergarten class planted at the Saugeen River CSA. Our next story will be about the harvest loaf, a Michaelmas story that will lead us through our bread-making preparation for the festival on September 29th.

*The sun is shining, the sky is blue,
Let's go to the orchard, you come along too!*

On Wednesday October 6th we will have a farm visit field trip to Glencolton Farms and look forward to the sun shining and the sky blue, living into our circle play from the month of September. We are incorporating French songs and finger plays into our circle, some favourites that the children delight in reciting. We have begun our weekly watercolour painting, experiencing the light of yellow for September. Imagining that the brush is a little duck that dips in a clear lake and waggles its tail, before flying to the paper without being too heavy, the children are gently learning how to care for the brushes and create beautiful paintings.

Parent and Child Classes

If you, or someone you know, is interested in attending the first semester of Parent and Child classes starting in October and running for six weeks, please contact Millie Johnne (519-922-3168) or Lise Gunby, at the school (info@edgehill-school.com or 519-369-3195).

Lavender Class

Leigh Mellor



We are off to a great start in the Lavender class. We may be a small class but we are finding our strong clear voices in circle. In these first few weeks we have been learning many seasonal songs, verses and tongue twisters.

We are also preparing for the Michaelmas celebration on September 29th in craft, painting and song. The Lavender Class has been joining the Linden Kindergarten for snack and snack preparation. With our weekly bread-baking, we will be ready to help knead and shape the dragon bread this year.

Grade 1 is a year of many beginnings and we are getting used to doing book work, sitting in our desks, and helping with chores. In main lesson we have embarked on a journey with two sisters named Layla and Rosa who have many adventures in the magical forest of Tulseane. These stories give us the imagination from which we find straight and curved lines for our form drawing block. We have also started Wonder Books and are filling them with beautiful drawings that are inspired by the *Seven Year Wonder Book*.

The class has started playing the recorder and we are striving to play softly so the little gnome Ricky Douse will be so pleased with the music that he will make his way across the field for a closer listen. In handwork, Marie-Eve is guiding the children on their first knitting project and they have made their own needles.

I am looking forward to an exciting year that will be filled with fun, form and flexibility. I am most grateful for the opportunity to start these students on their journey into the grades. My intention is carefully to build a foundation this year that will serve to support them in their unfolding as beautiful human beings.

Thank you to Graciela Mustapha from the Larkspur and Lotus classes for our exciting French classes.



*The autumn winds blow open the gate,
St. Michael for you we wait.
We follow you, show us the way,
With joy we greet this autumn day.*

Please join the Edge Hill Michaelmas celebration September 29 at 2 p.m.

Larkspur Class

Christina Schwarz



*Ten brilliant blue heavenly stars
(with spurs attached)
clinging heartily to a single stem
rooted in the rich dark earth.*

The students are enjoying their vibrant new social mix and are already enjoying the fall weather as a group, “harvesting” pine cones in the back corner of our schoolyard at recess.

During these particular school years the children are leaving the naiveté of early childhood and becoming more earthbound. They are leaving the “Garden of Eden” and must now find the tools for survival. Learning of the many possibilities for housing, nourishment and clothing all readily available from the natural world that surrounds us helps the students to plant themselves firmly on our good earth.

Homes from many different geographic locations and how these locations influence the construction of these homes is the subject matter for this month’s main lesson block. We began in the high north of Canada with igloos. After we established a wintertime landscape of howling winds, sub-zero temperatures, no vegetation, and only animals and ice and snow to work with, the children were all reaching for their sweaters. Igloos were painted and were also drawn as spiraling blocks (an inside, looking-up version). We then wrote a short Inuit poem into our books.

*Hard times, dearth times
Plague us every one
Stomachs are shrunken,
Dishes are empty.*

Our next home was a wigwam in southern Ontario's dense old-growth forests on the banks of Lake Ontario. The students enjoyed depicting this forest and including everything needed for the natives to build homes and sustain themselves. Each home we study, along with its landscape, is complemented with a folktale. To help remember the stories we have been dramatizing them in various ways. This is one of the favored activities of the Larkspur Class.

The Larkspur students were able to create artwork and penmanship pieces to enter into the Neustadt Fall Fair. On Saturday most of the students were able to come to the fair. They tried their mightiest in the mini tractor pull and enjoyed the parade. Fern and Jasmine looked great in their old-fashioned dresses and received first prize for the wagon-pulling part of the parade. We were also very successful with our other entries.

We have been playing games and singing with Leigh and her Lavender class. This is much fun for the class and they don't even realize how much the rhythm and movement are working for their personal development.

Thank you P.J. for your sweetly productive recorder class. Thank you Rosemary for guiding the Grade 3 farming block. Thank you Elisa and Michael in advance for excursions to the farm for our farming, nature, and practical studies. Thank you to all the Larkspur class parents for your support.

*See? Out of my window
the earth has sheathed herself in indigo;
this may be the time she makes it through:*

*Her sapphire daggers, bursting their scabbards,
carve frantic constellations: elfin songbirds
vehement with blue and purple chords;
earth's reaching for her heavens, I for words*

*or any chink of rapture I can claim.
Delphinium. Larkspur. Larkspur. Delphinium.
Let me claim you as you climb and climb.*

Jacqueline Osherow

Lotus Class

Lise Gunby



The Lotus Class of Grade 4 and 5 students has, true to the opening verse of the upper grades – “I look into the world . . .” – gone out into the green world to explore fungi, ferns, flowers, and trees. A big thank you to parents for their willingness to drive and assist. We saw a mushroom “farm,” toured a local fern garden, visited a local lily enterprise, and learned about identifying trees: all within two weeks of school. However, the photos shown on this page and the next, taken on our Arboretum visit hosted by Bill Moses, show the effects of too much cold and constant rain on the sanity of students!



Malcolm Bainborough shows his capacity for enduring adverse weather, with support from his father, Bob, and Odin Schwarz-Frederickson.

Additional trips are scheduled for the Kinghurst Forest and for Inglis Falls, where we will study lichen and mosses. A big thank you to all the nature lovers and educators out there who so generously volunteer their time to our students.



Bree Racicot and Lyjah Mellor show their devotion to tree identification at the conservation authority Arboretum. Below, Calli Bye-McKelvey shows how she feels about wet working conditions while Tessie Bainborough tries to read soggy instructions. Natasha Bye holds aloft the umbrella. The class will be writing an account of their trip which will be forwarded to the naturalist club newsletter, The Hart's Tongue.



In addition to learning about the green world through our main lesson study, we have also been sketching and painting, and a visit to see the work of Tom Thomson at the gallery in Owen Sound was on our tours. Students from the Lotus and Laurel classes are working with

the gallery's Tom Thomson kit and are drawing, painting, and writing our way towards an exhibit.

In circle we are celebrating a balanced class of girls and boys with a poem by Tolkien which is a conversation between the Ent (talking tree) and the Ent-wife. We hope to present this in assembly soon. The Lotus Class is blessed with wonderful sweet voices and will also be sharing some songs.

We are experiencing co-operation and co-ordination by using beanbags and a combination game of movement and word association. We are beginning work on soprano and alto recorders and are trying hard to incorporate both seasoned and beginning recorder players. In handwork we are creating our own designs for cross-stitch and, after our round of wonderful field trips, plan to settle down to some stitching, spelling, and sums!

Laurel Class

Liza McIntosh



Welcome back! I hope your summer was everything you wished it to be.

The Laurel Class has begun the school year with some wonderful field trips and we are planning more before the weather gets colder. Our geology block is taking us to several areas of Grey and Bruce counties where the Earth's history is revealed. We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful place. Thanks to Jarmo for sharing your knowledge of the Bruce's Caves and area with us.

I am looking forward to a year of exploration and experimentation with the Laurel Class.

The students have set themselves some admirable goals and are already working steadily to achieve them. They will surely “earn their laurels” this year.



Edge Hill students on a field trip. From left: Speak No Evil, Hear No Evil, and See No Evil!

CALENDAR FUNDRAISER

People are buying calendars and smiling warmly as they hand over their money and, we hope, every time they look at it through the year that warm feeling returns. These people understand community and the connection formed by helping one another. This calendar humbly exists in that connection; everyone please continue to reach out and see the good that can come from this endeavour.

Hurrah!

Thank you to Chris McInnes, a educational assistant who has been volunteering her time at Edge Hill. You make an important difference!

CLASSIFIEDS

School families and visitors are reminded to keep all dogs on a leash when visiting the school. Some children are uncomfortable around strange dogs, and the dogs often leave their calling cards on the playground.

For Sale: 2 Guinea Pigs. Ernie and Bert are 1 1/2 year old males. They are friendly and healthy. They come with a large indoor cage, outdoor cage, and all the accessories. \$60 or best offer. Kailey McIntosh, 369-1767



Michaelmas celebrations date back to the sixth century. According to legend, Saint George, England’s patron saint, was the Archangel Michael’s earthly representative. Saint Michael threw Lucifer out of heaven for his treachery while Saint George slew dragons on Earth.

Traditionally, Michaelmas celebrations were harvest festivals. Music, dancing, food, costumes and games were the bulk of the festivities. Children at a Michaelmas festival would pretend to be Saint George and reenact dragon slayings.

WELCOME TO ALL OF THE FAMILIES NEW TO EDGE HILL THIS YEAR!