



Edge Hill Country School

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Newsletter: January 2011



News from the Board

Diane Ferguson

Chair, Board of Directors

We wish everyone a great New Year! Thanks to everyone who helped to make the Advent Fair a wonderful community event. Thanks also to Philly Markowitz for her work on "A Christmas Carol," presented at the Durham Town Hall with proceeds shared by the Art Gallery and Edge Hill. Thanks to May Tettero for heading up the contra dances. We have another one coming on February 11 at the Durham Town Hall and hope everyone can make it out. And thank you to those guiding us through the Seven Liberal Arts workshops, with the next session on January 23: Poetry "Truth, Beauty and Goodness."

Also a big thank you and get well soon (as she recovers from surgery) to Marianne Else who



At the Festival Assembly in December, clockwise from top left: Madeleine Erickson, Fern Dean-Thornton, Jasmine Bryson (Festival Assembly, St. Brigid play); Kayley O'Rourks and Lily McGivern (Stone Soup play).

has led the children and adults through eurythmy this fall term.

As you all know, many hands go into the greater community of Edge Hill. Sometimes it

seems like the same hands and we'd like to encourage others to help out as best they can. We are currently looking for food donations for the contra dance. We could also use some help on clean up. We're wondering if someone in the wider community has any spare time. Clean up at the dances is a continuing issue as it is late and we all have young children. If this is an area in which you can help, please contact the school and we'd be glad to add your name to the list.

We're also looking for a gently used computer as the one in our office has recently subsided. We're trying to see if it can be revived, but if you know that someone has one kicking around, please contact the school.

We had our fist board meeting of 2011 on Thursday to assess the year to date and to look forward on how best to market ourselves for the coming school year, how to encourage people to volunteer so we don't burn out our head of fundraising (they're hard to come by, you know), and different ideas for cooking up a feast for our fundraising events.

On February 6, the board and faculty will be coming together for an all-afternoon planning session, looking at the next three to five years and more detailed planning for next year. If you have any thoughts and ideas you'd like to bring forward, please send something to the board or faculty, and we'd be happy to present them. I'll give you a full update in the next newsletter.

We're also looking forward to Edge Hill's 25th year and are making plans to mark this occasion. Thank you to all of you who continue to support Edge Hill!

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.

Art as a Spiritual Activity

**Facilitated by Leigh Mellor
with guest artists**

*An exploration of The Seven Liberal Arts
through artistic expression and contemplation*

*Please join us in a series of adult workshops
To be held on Sunday afternoons
At Edge Hill Country School*

November 21

**The Arts in Anthroposophy and Waldorf
Education** Leigh Mellor, Marianne Else

December 12

Painting "The Twelve Holy Nights" Jen Clark

Thank you Leigh, Marianne, and Jen!

January 23

Poetry "Truth, Beauty and Goodness" Lise
Gunby

**THOSE ATTENDING January 23, please bring an
object of beauty or importance to you.**

February 13

Sculpture "Being Human" Tony Massett

March 6

Music "Harmony of the Soul" Simon Jo-
Keeling

April 10

Acting "The Mystery Dramas" Kimm Culkin

May 15

Architecture "Sacred Space" Mike McKelvey

June 12

Dance "Inspired Movement" Janice Fisher

**Artistic workshops to be held the main building
at Edge Hill Country School**

1:00pm-4:00pm

1:00-2:00 Conversation about art in Waldorf
Education 2:00-4:00 Artistic Activity

\$15 per Sunday, including materials

Call Leigh Mellor at 519 369-1654 or 519 369-3195
to register

(Please note that one does not have to take all eight
classes to participate)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Sunday, February 6
Board and Faculty Retreat

Friday, February 11
Contra Dance
7:30 p.m., Durham Town Hall

We are seeking donations of food and refreshments, as well as volunteers to staff the food table and the door, and for clean up. We hope to see many friends, old and new!

Monday, February 14
Teddy Bears' Picnic
All students may bring a friend for the school Valentine's picnic.

February 21
Civic holiday

PARENT AND CHILD

Imitation, Movement, and Pictures

These are key words for young children. Add a loving, warm environment and they will thrive. To join the spring session or for more details, contact the school at info@edgehill-school.com or Millie Johne at 519-922-3168.

CALENDAR FUNDRAISER UPDATE

Thank you everyone for doing your best at getting the calendars out – this first-time fundraiser and outreach has been a success. It is now time to return all remaining money collected from the sales. So far, the cost has been recovered and there is a profit of \$480 for the school in the money remitted for the calendars sold up till now. Every extra dollar that comes in from this point on will be entirely profit. If you have any calendars left that you have been unable to sell, please return them to Marc or Marie-Eve.

Marc Fortin

Class News

Linden Kindergarten

Marie-Eve Perreault



The Linden Kindergarten is enjoying the new rhythm accompanying the new year. With all the advent assemblies and end of term presentations, it was difficult to keep up our usual gentle rhythm. The Christmas angels brought some new baskets and playhouse toys that have enjoyed some fresh new play since the return from the holidays.

Our circle is shifting into the winter garden where we meet the North Wind, King Winter, Jack Frost and soon dwarfs, gnomes and woodcutters. The older students are enjoying creating new verses for songs or mixing it up for fun. We are also incorporating some French for circle and with our lunch blessing. We are continuing with our weekly food rhythm of eating rice on Mondays and preparing stone soup for Tuesday's snack. A vegetable from home helps the children to be involved and to experience the bridge between home and school. Tuesday we prepare muffins for Wednesday and the sourdough starter for Thursday's rye bread. Our Thursday is free for crafting, finger-knitting or longer projects. During free play in the morning, colouring is always available. The children have been particularly interested in developing their cutting abilities and are improving their fine motor skills with the scissors. Wednesdays continue to be a favourite with our watercolour painting day.

We welcome Ethan Doherty-Strange back to Edge Hill; he has joined us Mondays and Wednesdays since mid-December. With the

Grade 1 students joining us for morning snack, our table is nice and full. Much interest has already been noted for Kindergarten next year by new and returning families. Pre-registration forms for Kindergarten will go out by the end of January to confirm intentions for next year.

Lavender Class

Leigh Mellor



The seeds are sleeping in the ground
The trees dream of the sky
The animals creep through the forest snow deep
And King Winter am I.
My kingdom reaches far and near
My icicle crown stands high
I rule stone and tree and sleeping beast
And King Winter am I.

King Winter has certainly made his appearance and the sun sparkles on the snow so magically. The snow has brought not only beauty but a crisp and clean start to the new year. As we returned from our holidays and found our way back into our daily rhythms we took some time to look back at our accomplishments of the last year. Both Lily and Kayley did a wonderful job on stage during the Festival Assembly and were very brave to stand before such a large audience. Well done, girls!

As we embrace the new year we find that King Winter is right there to call the Lavender Class out to play in the snow. The children are enjoying time outside building snow castles and sliding down the front hill. King Winter is also filling our circle time with songs and the poetry of January days, winter play and white sparkling worlds.

Our circle time is also a time for counting, clapping and stomping various number

patterns as we have started our second main lesson block in mathematics. The first block took us on a journey through Tulseane where the qualities of numbers were revealed and gem bags were filled.

Now we are finding out more about our gnomes Addi Plus, Sachkin Minus, Muktha Times and Devi Divide. The class is using their gems to explore the four mathematical processes which is a focus for Grade 1. After movement, counting and song during circle time we work with our gems and little chalkboards to develop math sentences. The story of the gnomes creates a rich and lively imagination which the students are bringing to their main lesson books.

There are a few changes for the winter term with regard to some of the skills classes. We will not be continuing with eurythmy for the winter term as Marianne Else is recovering from surgery and would also prefer not to drive during the winter months. We are grateful of her work in the fall.

We will now be led in dance by Lise Gunby. This will be a fabulous way to move together during the winter months and to foster the social grace within the grades. The Grade 2 class will join us for pentatonic recorder work once a week and I look forward to playing wintery tunes of snow falling as we practice our scale and find clear tones.

We have also needed to carve out a class for sewing. The Grade 1 class is very keen to sew so we have created a spot for this well-loved skill. They have just happily completed their sewing books and are ready to go with more complicated projects.

The Lavender class wishes you all a very happy new year and hopes you may all enjoy King Winter as much as we do.

Reminder: please do not idle your car in the parking area at the school.

Larkspur Class

Christina Schwarz



Dramatic arts and seasonal themes have prevailed since the last newsletter. The time-telling block was completed and we played a “time-telling bingo” to finish it off although we are continuing with practical work to support their new skills. Our subsequent block was form drawing complemented by poetry. We concentrated on running forms as a precursor to cursive writing.

The Larkspur Class did wonderfully with their play of St. Brigid and the songs they learned for the play were beautiful. Thank you, P.J., for helping with the songs and thanks to the parents for costuming. The class also had opportunity to work on some lovely seasonal crafts, creating grapevine wreaths with stitched stars, cranberry garlands and peace doves. We also painted cards and included verses. These were sold at the Advent Fair to raise money for the school. Great job, everyone!

David and Marcia were kind enough to visit the class and teach us about Hanukkah as well as treating us to some delicious latkes. We included the Star of David in our math block under the three times tables and all class members wove it perfectly. We read *The Firebird* and the Grade 3 class is working on independent summaries. The Grade 3s also had their December farm visit to Glencolton. A beautiful fleece craft was also created during their visit. The Grade 2s and I read out of *The Seven Year Wonder Book*, stories of Advent and Saint Nicholas visits and painted the fox, Refusi Ryneker, speeding along.

During one of our Wednesday assemblies the class performed the three times tables in a

round of three to the tune of Frère Jacques. We are currently working on the 4 and 5 times tables; any practice at home would be helpful as students need to memorize them. The Grade 2s are working on carrying and borrowing and are understanding it well with the help of beads, seeds and red discs for the ones, tens and hundreds. When the house is too full we must move on . . . Our last class painting was part of form drawing and featured mirrored tree forms and a babbling brook of running Cs. We added salt for an icy winter effect and the finished work is hanging up in the. All should be proud of their accomplishments. Thanks again for the soups, the thoughtful Christmas presents and all of your continued support.

Lotus Class

Lise Gunby



Know the self to be sitting in the chariot, the body to be the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, and the mind the reins.

Veda Upanishads

Life in the Lotus Class, given our cast of characters, cannot be boring. Students had a wonderful time aboard their pirate ship during the Festival Assembly performing their musical, Yo Ho Ho, and did a heart-warming job of singing, dancing, and acting. Thank you to the Lotus parents for the provision of costumes and props, gifts and grog.

We also thank Simon Mellor for visiting to share his experiences in India and his thoughts about dharma and karma. A warm thank you as well to Beverley Viljakainan, for coming in to teach us a little Sanskrit, including how to write our names in script. She also shared the gift of the Gayatri Mantra with us. Yoga continues with Aiyana Hartan – another gift.



The Lotus Class performing Yo Ho Ho at the Festival Assembly.

We are finishing up our study of India, having read an abbreviated version of the Ramayana. We will linger a little longer with Krishna stories before moving on to another ancient culture. At the same time, we have begun our block of form drawing and freehand geometry. One of the pleasures of being a Waldorf teacher is how much one discovers, no matter how many years one has taught. The curriculum is so rich, and each class calls upon it so differently, that there are always fresh discoveries. We hope to share some of our geometric musings and marvellings with the class parents, and to challenge them with some freehand magic!

We continue to sing often, and I continue to be grateful for the talents in this lovely group of children. At present our favourite is a song called "Peace Prayer Mandala," which is in six parts that acknowledge the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Native traditions. The mandala has also informed our art work in both geometry and our study of India. Thank you to Jen Clark for sharing her own artistic work with mandalas over several years, and for sharing her father's special paints with us and leading us in painting individual mandalas. It is marvelous how our recent class work in geometry leads us to revisit the mandala and its infinite forms.

Geometry is being complemented by a wide-ranging math practice schedule which includes all curricular strands and challenges the students with larger numbers and more complex concepts.

In language classes, we have finished *The Cat Who Went to Heaven*, a novel with a Buddhist theme, in reading groups. Students also

completed magnificent book reports which they presented in decorated boxes.

An exhibit of painting by Lotus and Laurel students, on the theme of Tom Thomson, is currently at Chicory Common. Check it out! Warm wishes to the Anderson family as they make plans for their future. We miss you, Mackenzie! Thanks also to Allison Arnold for supplying us with a water cooler.

Laurel Class

Liza McIntosh



The Laurel Class had a relaxing Christmas break and is now hard at work discovering the "shocking truth" about electricity. We have already turned ourselves into batteries and listened to the electricity produced by a stack of coins. The next few weeks promise to be even more interesting as we continue to explore this elemental force.

We are continuing our geometrical drawing block with some perspective drawing with Jen.

She took us to visit Tony Luciani's studio in Durham, where we saw some of his work. Tony spent some time helping us with our drawing skills. What a treat! Thanks Jen and Tony for a special afternoon.



Noah Wearing Jalava in the Grade 6-7 rendition of scenes from Julius Caesar.

The Laurel students are also busy writing their speeches for the Legion's Public Speaking Competition. We visited the Durham Library to gather research materials for the speeches and to practice research skills.

In addition, the children are very absorbed in their cooperative creative writing project which they have been working on all year. I'm very excited to see the end result this spring.

We were sad to say "See you soon" to Noah last week. His family is spending the winter in Mexico (lucky!) and will be back in March. We will keep in touch and are looking forward to his return.

from An Introduction to Waldorf Education

by Rudolf Steiner

It would be fatal if the educational views upon which the Waldorf School is founded were dominated by a spirit out of touch with life. Today, such a spirit may all too easily arise because people have come to feel the full part played in the recent destruction of civilization by our absorption in a materialistic mode of life and thought during the last few decades. This feeling makes them desire to introduce an idealistic way of thinking into the management of public affairs. Anyone who turns his attention to developing educational life and the system of instruction will desire to see such a way of thinking realized there especially. It is an attitude of mind that reveals much good will. It goes without saying that this good will should be fully appreciated. If used properly, it can provide valuable service when gathering manpower for a social undertaking requiring new foundations. Yet it is necessary in this case to point out how the best intentions must fail if they set to work without fully regarding those first conditions that are based on practical insight.

This, then, is one of the requirements to be considered when the founding of any institution such as the Waldorf School is intended. Idealism must work in the spirit of its curriculum and methodology; but it must be an idealism that has the power to awaken in young, growing human beings the forces and faculties they will need in later life to be equipped for work in modern society and to obtain for themselves an adequate living.

The pedagogy and instructional methodology will be able to fulfill this requirement only through a genuine knowledge of the developing human being. Insightful people are today calling for some form of education and instruction directed not merely to the cultivation of one-sided knowledge, but also to abilities; education directed not merely to the cultivation of intellectual faculties, but also to the strengthening of the will. The soundness of this idea is unquestionable; but it is impossible to develop the will (and that healthiness of feeling on which it rests) unless one develops the insights that awaken the energetic impulses of will and feeling. A mistake often made presently in this respect is not that people instill too many concepts into young minds, but that the kind of concepts they cultivate are devoid of all driving life force. Anyone who believes one can cultivate the will without cultivating the concepts that give it life is suffering from a delusion. It is the business of contemporary educators to see this point clearly; but this clear vision can only proceed from a living understanding of the *whole* human being.