We strive to be a school in which the joy of artful learning is vibrant, alive, and leads us to embrace a healthy, spiritual and sustainable community.

Volume 1, Issue 3, May 2005

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By Leslie Ward
Orchard Valley Board Member

The □ealthy Middle School Committee has been working hard to assess a plan for taking the Orchard Valley School through □th grade and presented its work, thus far to the OVS Board.

The committee¶ s work encompasses two areas of analysis□ how the school can best support a middle school curriculum □ and the all the day to day needs of middle school students□ and can the school afford to provide this? Secondly, what are the space requirements over time of serving grades □ through □ and what are the options for phasing in those physical changes and ¿ nancing them?

In response to the ¿ rst concern, a strong recommendation was made to form a "middle school faculty" □ a team of teachers who would cycle through □ th through □ th grades, thus forming a strong support system for each other and a deeper experience base in more complicated subject matter. This is a model that many Waldorf schools are now adopting and it seems to have many advantages □ strengthening the faculty for both grades 1 to 5 and the middle school. It was also recogni□ ed that each grade would have a visiting outside teacher teach one block per year, thus giving the main teacher a block of intense preparation time mid□ year.

□ dditional resources identi¿ ed for operating a middle school encompass increased assessment and academic support for both incoming and current students and minor increases in outreach expense and classroom supplies over our current per student cost. The analysis shows that the school can support those increased costs and that the middle school, itself, will fully support these costs as it grows into three fully enrolled classrooms.

Fifth Grade Science Class.

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By Deb Reed
Orchard Valley Parent

This year □ acqueline Gabe¶ s ¿ fth grade class¶ s study of history focused on the ancient cultures of India, Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The class then focused on □ ncient Greek civili□ ation. Ms Gabe brings these ancient cultures alive through art, literature, drama, and research projects to give the children a vivid impression. They read translations of poetry, studied and wrote with hieroglyphic symbols of the Egyptians, sampled arts and crafts of the various peoples, trying their hand at similar creations. The Gym curriculum, led by David Maynard, has focused on teaching the children the old style Greek Pentathlon events□ wrestling, running, javelin, discus and the long jump.

On May 2□ th and 2□ th, students from ¿ ve or six Waldorf schools in the region will enter and create ancient Greek culture and participate in the Greek Pentathlon events of javelin, discus, long jump, long run, and 50□ yard dash. This will be the ¿ rst time students from our Orchard Valley School have participated in this event. Our very ¿ rst ¿ fth grade class will launch into this very special tradition as a high point in the ¿ fth grade curriculum. The Olympic Games will take place at Lake Champlain Waldorf School in Shelburne, Vermont, and OVS students will join ¿ fth graders from list of other schools□□ thletes receive awards for grace and form as well as strenght and speed. This event is one more unique element of Waldorf schools.

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By Sharon Zanderslice
Lexington Waldorf School

When asked recently, on a high school application, to list aca□ demic awards he had won, Waldorf student Greg Donahue gave the same answer that every other student in his class would have given. □ one.

□ ot one has ever been given an academic award, elected presi□ dent of a club, selected to be the star of a show, or voted captain of a school team. Instead, Greg and his classmates have been encouraged since nursery school to move forward as a group. They¶ ve built playhouses together, done science experiments together, swept À oors together, and acted in plays together □ even to the point of learning all of each other¶ s lines. Far from the goals of the "me generation", the focus of a Waldorf school is on "we."

This seeming de□ emphasis on indi□ vidual achievement runs counter to the messages parents and children receive from nearly every other cor□ ner of the culture □ where the desire to get ahead often means pushing someone else out of the way.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of

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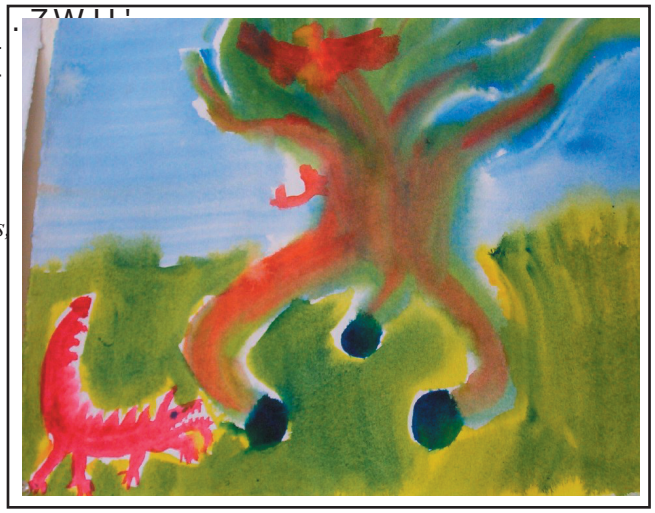

By Timothy Edgar,
1st Grade Teacher

Walking through a ¿ eld where the bees are bu□ □ ing in the apple trees, the sun is just cresting the ridge while dew sparkles and dampens my paint leg, deep questions arouse a ponderous reverence toward the rising sun. □ re the forces coming forth from the earth and cosmos suf¿ cient to bring health, vitality and spiritual awareness to human beings? This is a question that we may or may not be asking about the food we take into our body every day and with every meal we eat □ nother question might be "what does it feel like to eat rich vitally alive food?" Can food affect our state of mind and the energy of our will and the richness of our feeling? Can our food help to bring us beyond the material world to the world of the spirit and the supersensible. What is our involvement to the food we eat?

Rudolf Steiner stated when speaking to a group of farmers about the "crisis" in agriculture, " □ utrition as it is today does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. □ bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. Food plants no longer contain the forces people need for this." These were prophetic words spoken nearly eighty years ago when ¿ elds were going fallow much sooner, seed vitality and crop longevity was falling, and pests were on the increase. If we compare this time to the **crisis□ i□ □ □ □ ricX □ WX r□ □ W□ □ □ \ □ Z □ □ r□ □ s□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ i□ \ □ □ □ r□ s□ □ □ Y □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Z □ ic□ □ □ r□ □ c□ □ □ □ i□ □ □ W□ □ □ □ cWX □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ sWrX cWX r□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Ws□ □ □ □ □ □ □ i□ □ r□ Z □ □ Wr□ □ □ □ □ □ X s□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Ws□ □ r□ Z ic□ □ c□ \ □ ic r□ Z \ □ □ r□ □ Y □ is□ □ WW□ □ □ □ □ c□ c□ W□ i□ s□ Z □ ic□ □ Z □ r□ s□ W□ r□ X □ □ □ W□ □ □ Z □ W□ r□ □ □ rc□ si□ W W□ □ r□ □ □ X c□ □ □ Z □ is Ws\ rsWsZ □ □ ³ □ [□ □ □ siY □ ´ □ W□ □ □ □ i□ W□ i□ □ □ □ □ □ □ c□ rW□ i□ □ \ □ □ □ W ´ sX sW□ i□ □ □ □ □ W□ Z □ □ □ □ □ □ □ W□ □ c□ □ □ r□ ici□ □ s□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ X □ □ ici□ □ s□ □ □ □ □ □ □ Z □ □ □ □ Z □ □ c□ □ si□ □ r□ W□ □ □ □ □ □ □ r□ □ □ □ □ □ □ W□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ W□ □ □ i□ cr□ □ si□ □ □ c□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ s□ i□ □ □ □ X c□ Wi□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ W□ □ □ □ □ icW XWic□ □ □ □ □ r□ □ □ □ □ W□ □ □ i□ □ □ rW□ □ c□ □ □ □ □ ³ □ X WriWi□ □ ´ □ i□ □ □ □ ricX □ WX r□ □**

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□ ust how are these "forces" concentrated and worked is a subject of continued research and study. The answers from even a materialistic viewpoint speak loud and clear. Through Biodynamic techniques, food has superior taste, nutritional content, and keeping qualities. □ nd what about the women, men and children who eat these foods? Do they have increased and heightened capacities, and health? I would encourage you to look beyond the materialistic viewpoint of things and begin exploring / developing ones inner knowledge via the practice and study of biodynamics.

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By David Menard
Orchard Valley School Gym / Movement Teacher

It seems that presently there are stresses in the world that are increasing day by day and yet we plug along in a direction that is almost impossible to change. I¶ ve been lucky to become the Movement □ Physical Education□ teacher at the Orchard Valley School and granted the leeway to use my imagination to initiate a change in direction. The school¶ s interest in sustainability is what drew me to the school and when I made a strange request for my work they met my request. I wanted the athletic ¿ elds to be unlevel with rolls and dips in it. I¶ ve been a Waldorf Movement Teacher for almost 10 years and I¶ ve observe something very fascinating about children¶ s movement. □ oung children that run on rolling ¿ elds or through the woods gain balance and their reaction to changing terrain increases. These children rarely sprain an ankle and I¶ ve never seen a broken bone and yet as they get older they can run faster and faster through terrain that many would deem dangerous to run in. When these same children get older and are in high school they compete on level athletic ¿ elds and now they just have to run, and run they can.

When I was the Movement Teacher at Green Mountain Waldorf School we just didn¶ t have the money to invest in ¿ xing and maintaining any kind of ¿ eld. □ t the time I thought it was such a handicap for the children to have such a pathetic movement curriculum. Games were invented not only by the adults but also a game called "Footsie" by the children. □ s the years passed, the children¶ s speed increased along with their adaptability to boundaries and rule changes. The day I reali□ ed all of this was a day I was playing "Thumbs □ p, Thumbs Down" with the □th grade during movement class. This is essentially a tag game which for many □th graders across our country is a game for younger children. □ boy named Ben was "it". For years I tried to get Ben to wear sneakers to class unsuccessfully. There was always an excuse. They were left in his father¶ s car, the dog chewed them and the list went on. On this day Ben had sandals on. I was on a ridge and Ben spotted me from quite a distance and he decided to chase me. I started moving across the ridge when I reali□ ed he was running quite fast. I started running through the woods as fast as I could but he caught up with me and I was tagged. □ ow in the world could this happen? □ nth grader in sandals is faster than me. □ ow when I think about this day I wonder what our children are missing by not being able to run through changing terrain.

OV picked a ¿ eld that I could use and it was perfect. In the whole ¿ eld there is only one level spot where we can jump rope but besides this one spot it rolls and dips just like I imagined it should. I¶ ve had a lot of time to think of all the rami¿ cations of having such a ¿ eld since the fateful day. One of the things I¶ ve considered in this time period is the amount of oil used in our everyday life. Many think that the reason we are at war right now has to do with oil. If this happens to be so, then ways to reduce our oil should be of great importance. I would hate to think that we are educating children so they can ¿ ght to insure that we get the oil needed to run our society when maybe we, through imagination, can decrease our need. It turns out that it is common thought through out the world that children need level ¿ elds to play on. To make an area level machinery is needed which need oil to run. Could it be that if we needed less level ground that we would need less machinery? This in itself is critical because not only do you need oil to run the machinery but also oil to build the factories to produce the machinery, to run the factories and to ship the machines. The oil consumption doesn¶ t stop at just the use of the machines. The soil itself needs close inspection. In a handful of soil there are billions and billions of microbes. These microbes are responsible for maintaining soil structure. They do this by taking organic material such as grass and other plants □ also dead animals□ and decomposing them eventually into humus. In other words plant take in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the process of photosynthesis throughout their life and after they die microbes break this down. Some of this carbon is trapped in the form of humus while some is trapped more permanently in the soil structure itself. The carbon dioxide, the leading green house gas, is taken out of the atmosphere and a portion of the C is trapped in the soil reducing the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. The microbes are crucial to this process. Microbes stimulate root growth and root growth, stimulate microbial growth. The more kinds of grasses and weeds that are in the ¿ eld the more kinds of microbes in the soil which increases soil structure which decreases atmospheric carbon dioxide. When making the ¿ eld À at machines scrape this valuable resource off and disrupt this whole process.

I looked over the new ¿ eld at OV and the grass was high. I talked it over with one of the teachers and if we got the grass mowed the ¿ eld would be ready. Well, you know how things go. □ t a new school there is a list of things to do and I guess mowing the movement ¿ eld was at the bottom or maybe it didn¶ t even make the list. Determined to use our new ¿ eld we had class on it anyway. To my ama□ ement the grass wore away in just a few days. Where did all that grass □ carbon□ go to? I could almost hear those happy microbes chomping away. It was soon apparent that another ¿ eld was needed. We had to rotate ¿ elds so the grass in the ¿ eld did not wear out. Where did I hear this rotation thing before? Tending the ¿ elds and making sure the À ock of sheep do not over gra□ e.

When soil structure is increased the soil can hold more water which prevents À ooding and in draughts serves as a water reserve for the grasses and weeds that cover the ¿ eld. The question is, how much oil does our society use in À ood prevention, rebuilding buildings after À ooding, pumping water for irrigation and how much oil is needed to ¿ ght against global warming?

□ ccording to the □ □ one of the main causes of terrorism is poverty. These countries are following our example so if we need well groomed ¿ elds do they also need the oil to make their ¿ elds look like ours? Let¶ s not forget just how much oil it takes to ¿ ght this battle not to mention considering who exactly is going to do the ¿ ghting. It is through our imagination, inspiration and intuition that will lead us through such changes. We can increase our abilities while at the same time cooperate not only with other cultures but also with the Earth.

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By Karen Liebermann
Orchard Valley School Parent

Imagine a summer morning starting with a circle of children in the meadow at Grace Farm, greeting the world and each other with a message of thanksgiving before heading off for a day in the woods with their peers and adult mentors. They¶ ll make a ¿ re, perhaps even cook their lunch.

They¶ ll track otters by the river and search for salamanders. They¶ ll learn to songline their way through the woods, and they¶ ll learn to listen deeply as they sit quietly at a secret spot. Sound like fun?

EarthWalk VT is proud to be offering our ¿ rst round of summer camps at Grace Farm in □ uly and □ ugust of 2005. We¶ re thrilled about this partnership with OVS and the potential for adventure and magic on the Grace Farm campus.

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For more information, please contact Karen Liebermann at 223□ 31□ □ .

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By Deb Reed
Orchard Valley School Parent

First Grade Math Class.

Orchard Valley School is offering a weeklong "Windows on Waldorf" summer program the week of □ une 2□ □ □ uly 1 at the Grace Farm Campus. This program is designed to introduce children entering grades 2 □ □ to some of what is unique to Waldorf education. Each morning will begin with games and singing, storytelling and an artistic activity. □ fternoon activities will include music, handwork, foreign language and outdoor time for exploration and play. The camp program coordinators are David Maynard, and Lisa Damian. Lisa and Davia bring a wealth of experience as Waldorf teachers and teachers of games, circus arts, and theater across the grades.

This is an opportunity for the children to explore OVS in an experiential way while parents too learn more about the school through conversations with the teachers, administrator and other parents. The faculty has designed this week to ease the children¶ s transition to Orchard Valley School. Children attending camp will make new friends, meet the teachers, discover the school grounds and sample elements of Waldorf education all contributing to their greater con¿ dence.

The camp is open to children who have con¿ rmed enrollment in grades 2□ □ as well as families who are considering OVS for their child. Camp tuition is □ 100.00 and limited scholarship assistance is available. For additional information call OVS at □ 5□ □ □ □ 00. The registration deadline is □ une 15th.

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