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Community Newsletter

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The Spiritual Science of Creativity: Art Classes with Chris Guilfoil

By Woody Fitzgerald

It all started about nine weeks ago. My wife signed me up for a watercolor painting class. I didn't really want to go, and I definitely didn't want to learn how to paint...what would an unemployed entomologist do with such a skill? Paint bugs? But she insisted I go at least one time and if I didn't like it then she would take my place. Fair enough.

Participants in our painting class included parents from our school and folks from the community. The teacher of our class, Chris Guilfoil, teaches art at the Eugene Waldorf School and in the Eugene Teacher Training program. He is currently teaching art to the 5th/6th & 7th grades at the Corvallis Waldorf School and is also offering a series of adult art classes to our community.

So I went to the painting class and I painted. But I didn't just paint...it was nothing like painting the house last summer. I painted consciously. I felt the moods of the colors. I experienced a creative force flowing within in me,

Board/Faculty Retreat Review

By Julie Courtney

On Saturday, October 2, the CWS Board and Faculty gathered at Cindy Smith's house for our annual Retreat. Our time together proved to be fruitful and rewarding in several important ways.

Integrating two groups that usually function separately can lead to lively interchange, increased trust, and tremendous energy. As Torin Finser writes in his excellent book *School Renewal*, "If one spends time aligning expectations and goals, clarifying the purpose of the meeting, establishing norms of meeting conduct, and actively facilitating...one can experience a wonderful explosion of creativity and positive energy that radiates out into the whole school...It is helpful just to recognize that the needs of the group are different when the membership is drawn from various components of the school." Was our "integrated" meeting successful? I believe it was.

We began the morning with a stroll through Cindy's beautiful flower garden searching for just the right flower to add to the group bouquet that graced the mantel. Next, we greeted the day, the season, and the time in which we are living by singing a couple of Michael songs.

After the lively singing, Jo Mitchell, 7th grade teacher, gave an impromptu rendering of a powerful Hopi Prophecy, which is so relevant to our time.

Biographies

After this amazing message, we sat down and shared

manifesting in my brush strokes. The thinking, feeling, and willing realms of my being strived to cooperate. I broke down the door to the other half of my brain, a part which had gone dormant during the last ten years of sitting at the computer analyzing data. It awoke questions within me: Where does art come from and why do we do it? It was great fun and I admitted as much to my wife. (She knows me too well.)

Chris's method of teaching feeds the student's soul. Because the classes are taught from an Anthroposophical, or "spiritual scientific" perspective (defined as "the knowledge of the human being and what it can attain"), they are imbued with spiritual and philosophical underpinnings. This is very different from the way my high school art classes were taught. Art is more than material paper and paints...it is a transcendent experience. Furthermore, since Anthroposophy also underlies the Waldorf curriculum, I got a glimpse of how such a curriculum nourishes my child on a daily basis.

The watercolor painting class recently ended and the current class, which began November 2nd, is called Striving for Simplicity: Sculptural Principles in Clay. This class still has room for those who want to sign up...its not too late; Chris noted that the price of the class can be pro-rated for late-comers. The seven-week course costs \$126.00 and takes place at the Corvallis Waldorf School on Tuesday mornings from 9:00-10:30 a.m. There is a sign up sheet and a description of upcoming classes (winter and spring) in the school office. I know I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and impress my will into the material world again!

For more information about our adult art classes with Chris Guilfoil, contact the school office at 541-758-4674 or e-mail us at cwsadmin@peak.org.

times in our personal biographies when we were influenced by people making a positive impact on society. There were testimonials about inspirational mothers, fathers, and even fictional characters like Atticus from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. There were also moving stories of everyday heroes who put themselves in front of bulldozers to stop the logging of virgin forests, mounted campaigns to get women's restrooms installed on German campuses and American oil tankers, helped strangers fill sand bags during a flood, and brought babies gently into the world. Corvallis Waldorf School is more than just a nice private school for our children, it is a gift to humanity; *all* of our biographies illustrated how we use our various sources of inspiration in giving the gift of this school to the world.

Form Drawing

After the biography sharing, Lolly Rogers, the 5th/6th grade teacher, led us in a form drawing. She first drew the form on the chalkboard. Then we were all given several sheets of paper and colored pencils. I was reminded of how challenging these exercises are, how much will and concentration are needed to create a balanced form. Although mine was not balanced despite several sessions with an eraser (I am still wondering what it means that my right side was higher on the page than my left), Ms. Roger's form drawing was a flawless example of balance and symmetry. After the form drawing we took a short break for muffins, hard boiled eggs, coffee and tea, which were graciously provided by our hostess, Cindy Smith.

Advocacy & Inquiry Discussion Activity

After the break we embarked on an activity in which we experienced the difference between advocacy (telling, stating opinions) and inquiry (listening, asking questions) and strove to come to a balance between these two types of communication. First, we generated a list of questions revolving around the theme of "relationships." Then we broke into three groups and each group selected one question. The three chosen questions were: What is our school's vision and how do we get there? How do we retain pedagogical ideals? And how do we build community? I was inspired by the ideas that were generated from all three groups. We ended this activity by reconvening and sharing the fruits of our discussions.

To help us close the meeting, Jo led us in a powerful movement activity that got everyone flexing, grunting, jumping, breathing, and laughing.

I am currently compiling all the ideas that emerged

Hopi Prophecy

[A wise elder said], “This is [not] the Eleventh Hour . . . this is *the* Hour. And there are things to be considered...

Where are you living?
What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in right relation?
Where is your water?

Know your garden.
It is time to speak your truth.
Create your community.
Be good to each other.
And do not look outside yourself for the leader.”

“This could be a good time! There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above the water.

And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all, ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt. The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!

Banish the word ‘struggle’ from your attitude and your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. *We* are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

Hopi Nation - Oraibi, Arizona
June 8, 2000

from this retreat so that the valuable information is not lost. I am looking very forward to our next Board/Faculty meeting this winter!

Song of Michael

We of present time
Give ear to Spirit’s morning call
The call of Michael
Spiritual Knowledge seeks to open in our souls
True hearing of this morning call....
Now we look to you O morning star
Shining through the twelfth house
Dark brings out your light
Calling us to do what’s right
Help us dispel illusion
Morning star, shining shield of Michael,
Harbinger of the Sun Being.

(First five lines adapted from a verse by Rudolf Steiner; additional lines by Julie Courtney)

WinterFest

Join us on Saturday, December 11 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a magical celebration of the holiday season! This year’s event will include sonorous music, the lively Hanukkah Cafe, a serene Tea Room, wandering minstrels, enriching craft activities, and the beloved Crystal Cookie Cave! Admission is free and open to the public; tickets may be purchased for the craft activities at the event. For more information, contact our school office.

Mission Statement

Our intention is to educate independent-thinking people who meet life with courage and respond with initiative and creativity to the needs of the world and their fellow human beings.