



River Valley Current

October 25, 2016 No. 457

"Everybody is talented because everybody who is human has something to express."
Brenda Ueland

School Calendar

This Week

Thursday, October 27

Fall Assembly

6:30 pm

Friday, October 28

No School – Faculty In-Service

Monday, October 31

In-School Ancestors' Day/Harvest Celebration

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, November 1

6th grade field trip to Nurture Nature Center

Thursday, November 3

6th grade field trip to Ringing Rocks

Saturday, November 5

5th grade Workday

Wednesday, November 9

Parent Council Meeting

2:00 pm

Friday, November 11

Lantern Walk – EC, 1st & 2nd grades

Saturday, November 12

Holiday Bazaar

Thursday, November 17

EC Parent Enrichment Evening

Board Meeting

6:30 pm

Monday & Tuesday, November 21 & 22

No School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

Wednesday-Friday, November 23-25

No School – Thanksgiving Break

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org

lc@rivervalleyschool.org

bot@rivervalleyschool.org

pc@rivervalleyschool.org

November Lunch Menu

The lunch menu for November is attached to this week's Current.

Orders are due by Thursday, October 27th

**Next Parent Council meeting is on
Wednesday, November 9th at 2 pm**

Please come if you can!

Fall Assembly this Thursday, October 26, 6:30 pm

Our Fall Assembly is coming up on Thursday. Students from grade 2-8 will be performing. Parents and families from EC and 1st grade are welcome to attend to get a preview of what is in store for their children. Hope to see you there!

Students are asked to wear Festive Attire, described in the Parent Handbook as clothes that are "nicer than their everyday school clothes." This means no jeans or cargo pants, clean clothes with no pictures, text or glitter, skirts or dresses no shorter than 4" above the knee, button down shirts for the boys, no torn clothing and no sneakers.

Lantern Walk – November 11th

On Friday, November 11th, Early Childhood, First and Second grade children will be celebrating Martinmas with an annual Lantern Walk.

Celebrating St. Martin's Day (Martinmas), or Laternelaufen, is a tradition preserved in Waldorf schools everywhere. Tied to the legend of St. Martin, a French soldier who gave half his coat to warm a beggar in need, the event includes walking through the school grounds along a path lit by luminaries, singing songs and carrying lanterns the children have made in school.

The Lantern Walk is hushed (aside from the singing), and reverent, but not at all somber. It is a beautiful procession of lights at dusk symbolizing the turn of the season and the carrying of inner light into the darker months of the year.

Martinmas Coat Drive

As part of River Valley's celebration of the legend of Saint Martin we will once again be sponsoring our Annual Martinmas Coat Drive.

Please consider donating your gently used coats and jackets. Our music teacher Carol Diven is organizing the drive through the not-for-profit organization, One Warm Coat. The coats received will benefit Community Services for Children in Quakertown (<http://www.cscinc.org>).

New or gently used women's, men's and children's coats are all welcome and needed!

**A drop box will be located in the school lobby from November 1-
November 18 to receive your generous donations!**

Thank you Carol for once again organizing this wonderful way for RVWS to support to our greater community!

Last Chance to Join RVWS Ski Club

The Ski (and Snowboard) Club is an inexpensive way to enjoy 6 weekend-night visits to the mountain (Fri, Sat or Sun 4pm to 10pm). Children any age can sign up but they must be at least 8 years old to participate in the group lessons. Parents are responsible for their children's transportation to and from the mountain and supervision while at the mountain. All are welcome to join Ski Club. Invite your friends. They don't need to go to River Valley to be a part of our group. There are no paper forms this year. **To sign up for Ski Club use the link below.** You will need to copy and paste the link into your browser. The web site will walk you through the process. It is really simple! **Link:** <http://bit.ly/2dE4iM7>

For 6 visits: Lift ticket only \$145 - Lift ticket and Rental \$200 - Lift ticket and Lesson \$200 - Lift ticket, Rental and Lesson \$240

You will need to be signed up by October 26th. Questions? Please contact Christine Aherne, cmaherne@epix.net, 267-614-5021

Save the Date! Winter Fair!! Saturday, December 10th, 11-4

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration for children of all ages - a time to get together with friends and loved ones before the deep freeze and great snows of King Winter set in and we turn towards the coziness and warmth of our hearth and homes.

The success of the festival depends on the creativity and cooperation of River Valley's parent body. Each class hosts an activity and works to make the magic of Winter Fair happen for our children. Your Festival Coordinator will shortly let you know your activity so that you may begin preparations.

Secret Garden is one of the most magical places at the festival and one the children look forward to with anticipation. Many count on this beautifully prepared activity for the gifts they present their loved ones. Each family at RVWS is asked to make 20 Secret Garden items to aid this feeling of awe and wonder. These items can be small and homemade. A list of potential items can be found in the Parent Handbook. Also Mary K Till, our handwork teacher, usually has craft workshops for parents to come and make some treasures for Secret Garden (dates and times will be found in the Current).

In addition, parents will be asked to bake one batch of gingerbread cookies for our Gingerbread Tea House, which greets our children with warm tea and a sweet snack after visiting King Winter.
Recipe and instructions will be forthcoming.

Please contact this year's Winter Fair committee with any questions you may have.
Brenda Schaufele, Stephanie Smith, Paul Smith and Ron Ferguson.

From Administration

A Visit from the School Dentist

The school dentist will be here Wednesday, 10/26/2016. He will give a general exam to any Kindergarten, 3rd or 7th grader for whom we do not have a dental exam on file.

You will receive an email by Monday, if yours is missing! If your child has had a dental exam recently, or has one scheduled - please email cschretlen@rivervalleysschool.org (if you have not already done so) to let me know. The dentist for the Palisades school district is Dr. Larry Rakowsky - who also happens to be an RVWS alumni-dad!

SCHOOL TOUR MORNING

Next Wednesday, 11/2/2016 9:00 - 11:00am
Adults-only, babes in arms welcome. RSVP by phone or info@rivervalleysschool.org

If you have never been through the school while classes are in session, now is your chance! Please let your friends, family and acquaintances know about this opportunity.

If this one will not work, watch the calendar - we have one every month. You can also schedule an individual tour with Cindy at any time.

Lost and Found

It's time to empty the lost and found. Please check the basket this week. On Tuesday and Wednesday take what is yours; on Thursday and Friday, take what you can use. The rest will be donated to a local thrift store.

After-school Capoeira at River Valley for Grade 5-8

We are pleased to announce that starting next month River Valley Waldorf School will be hosting a new after school program, Capoeira, taught by renowned Contra-Mestra Gata Brava (Leigh Robertson) from New Hope's Morro Verde. The artform of Capoeira combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music, all within the context of Brazilian culture. It traces its origins back to the 1600's when West African slaves in Brazil developed it as a mean of resisting oppression.

In an interview with Amy Poehler, Gata said "Capoeira is more than a movement, it is the essence of Afro-Brazilian culture and thus incorporates music, the Portuguese language, folklore, strategy, playfulness, and trickery. Some of these things you can study and master, some you cannot". I encourage you to visit her website <http://www.newhopecapoeira.com/> and get acquainted with Gata's background and Capoeira in general.

We will host a school demonstration of Capoeira in the All-Purpose Room, next Wednesday at 2:30 pm. You are most welcome to attend; students from 5th through 8th grade will be present. Classes will be offered every Monday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm for students in 5th grade and up and will begin as soon as we have 12 students enrolled. The cost will be \$15 per class. We will begin with a 4-week trial period, the registration form for which is attached to this week's Current. If you have any questions, please contact Euclides at: esantiago@rivervalley.school.org

Waldorf School of Princeton Welcomes Kim John Payne

Loving Limits in a Digital Age: Not Anti-Screen but Pro-Connection to Nature and People

On Monday, November 28, 7 p.m. Waldorf School of Princeton is delighted to host Kim John Payne, author of *Simplicity Parenting* and *The Soul of Discipline*, for a public lecture that resonates this season and all year round!

"Loving Limits in a Digital Age: Not Anti-Screen but Pro-Connection to Nature and People" offers parents resources for navigating some of the greatest challenges facing our society today: How to maintain loving limits, warm, firm and calm discipline and strong family connections in a world where increasingly "screens are supreme." How to build focus, grit and good judgment so that our kids do not become overwhelmed with media-driven images but can shape their own self-esteem, hopes and dreams. How to encourage respect when negative images of adults pervade pop culture. Fitting in with friends ("Won't my kids be disadvantaged if I limit screen media?"). Aloneness vs. Loneliness: Helping kids know the difference. The alluring world of no boundaries that screen use develops and how this makes discipline difficult. A consultant and trainer to over 110 U.S. independent and public schools, Kim John Payne, M.ED, has been a school counselor, adult educator, researcher, education and a private family counselor for thirty years.

Tickets are \$10 online / \$15 at the door; sales begin Tuesday, October 11, through Eventbrite. Waldorf School of Princeton, 1062 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, NJ

High School Open Houses

Beginning in October many high schools in our area and beyond are holding Open Houses. Here is a list for parents and students who are interested.

Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts Open House: Tuesdays, Oct. 25, Nov. 15, and Jan. 5 at 5:45 pm. The program begins promptly at 6:30 pm.

Lotus School of the Liberal Arts Open House

Wednesday, October 26, 2-6pm
85 Sherman Rd, Ottsville, PA 18077 484 312 0011 www.lotusliberalarts.org

Mercersburg Academy Admission Office cordially invites you to attend our Open House event on Monday, December 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Bethlehem Catholic High School Open house Sunday, Nov. 6. email Jhenrich@becahi.org

Bucks Learning Cooperative - Open House: Monday, November 7th, 7:00-8:30pm, Langhorne, PA Hear from teen members, parents and staff mentor/teachers what it is like to be part of a self-directed learning cooperative. Tour our center. info@BucksLearningCooperative.org 215-512-0707

Waldorf School in Haiti Needs Help

Did you know there is a Waldorf school in Haiti? Well, there is and it was hit hard by the recent hurricane. The biodynamic garden that feeds the children was washed away and the roof blew off of their school building causing all of their school supplies to be destroyed. To see pictures of the school in better times and learn about what you can do to help, go to this link:

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=a0ce04e5a70babb8ef1330163&id=de55d03075&e=a3fe0cb38e>

Sunbridge College Fall Open Days

If you are thinking about becoming a Waldorf teacher, there are two opportunities to visit Sunbridge College in Chestnut Ridge, NY and learn more about their programs.

Thursday, November 10th – Waldorf Elementary School Teacher Training

Thursday, November 17th – Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Training

Visit www.sunbridge.edu for more information.

Thank You

A big thank you to the following people who participated in the 6th grade work day: The Kovach, Sayers, Betz, Duwalet-Brady, Ritchie and Kroth families. Your help is so greatly appreciated! Thank you, Building and Grounds

Thank you to everyone who came out for Saturday night's 80s Halloween Costume Ball. We had a fantastic time with GREAT food, music and dancing with DJ ARM18, otherwise known as Andrew McIntosh. Best Costume prizes went to Jen and Paul Kovach as Lydia Deetz and Beetlejuice, Kathy and Jef Betz as Ghostbusters, Louanne and Brian Willard as KISS, Tiffany Robinson as 80s Girl and Nestor Candellos as Richard Simmons.

Special Thanks to:

- Clare Brunell and Kristyn Lederer for a great job decorating and organizing food and drinks
- Rich Kroth, Andy Wander and Andrew for production
- the Schillings and Candellos for leading everyone in a grand finale choreographed dance to Michael Jackson's Thriller
- the Faculty and Administration for supporting the event
- Lynn Albaugh for additional planning and support
- DJ AMR18

...and to everyone who bought this item at the auction, raising nearly \$1000 towards the goal.

YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS GRATEFUL!

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!!!

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Math

Fourth Grade – Fractions

Fifth Grade – Ancient India & Persia

Sixth Grade – European Geography

Seventh Grade – Physics

Eighth Grade – Geometry

From the Pedagogical Chair

The Pedagogical Chair and the Connection to the Parent Body

The Pedagogical Chair functions in our school as a part of Pedagogical Support, along with our outside school mentors, and our Teacher Development Committee. In addition, the Pedagogical Chair functions as a bridge to the parent body, attending Parent Council Meetings, answering parent questions, and overseeing communication around pedagogical issues.

RVWS would like to bring more awareness, strength and positivity to our “community pillar”, which, in our community meeting/open BOT meeting last spring, appeared to be the realm in our school which was in need of more intentional development and focus. The faculty is working on ways to support this (for example, with a parent workshop series), and the awareness of “warming” our community is growing throughout the school.

Our communication protocol states that every community member should try to take their issue to the source, if at all possible. Questions around curriculum, or children in the classroom, for example, should always go directly to the teacher. However, if this step is taken and the issue feels unresolved or if the issue persists, the community currently has a new next step: the Pedagogical Chair.

(continued on the next page)

Conversations with the Pedagogical Chair are confidential and are not shared with another body in the school, unless it is determined by the Ped Chair that the issue may have legal ramifications that must be shared. In this case, the person bringing the issue will be notified immediately.

The Pedagogical Chair offers a similar function for parents as the proposed Listening Council initiative. Because of this, the school determined to allow the Pedagogical Chair bridge to develop, before considering whether or not the Listening Council is still necessary. **Our shared goal is to offer a comfortable place for parents to voice concerns, and to bring issues to speedy resolution.** Another shared goal is that parents are clear about whom to go to with an issue. It is our strong desire as a school to make this as transparent as possible. If your question is administrative, go to Cindy Schretlen. If your question is pedagogical (having to do with your child or the classroom), take it first to the class teacher, then to the Pedagogical Chair. The Pedagogical Chair is committed to helping each issue find resolution. If the issue concerns the Ped Chair, this is brought to the Ped Chair Review Committee.

I am available to schedule time to meet with parents, to answer questions and to assist in finding resolutions to issues that touch your children, or affect you as parents. Please do not hesitate to contact me at aporter@rivervalleysschool.org. I have time in my schedule to meet during the day, or before or after school.

Annie Porter

From the Community

Peter and the Starcatcher at Solebury School

November 3-5, 7:30 pm, November 6, 3 pm

Students \$5, Adults \$10

Purchase tickets at: www.ticketleap.com/solebury

The cast includes RVWS alumni Dominique Wander, Teva Skovronek, Ava Smith and Bianca Sessegolo. On the tech crew are Safwa Ozair and Kathryn Warner.

Lenape Chamber Ensemble Concert in the Round

For children ages 4-12, featuring music by Bach and Handel for oboe, recorder, violin, viola, cello, bass, bassoon and harpsichord.

Saturday, November 12th, 10-11 am at Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901.

Children: \$2, Adults Free. For more information call: 610-294-9361

A non-profit organization supported by the Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

Lenape Chamber Ensemble Baroque Fest

Featuring music by J.S. Bach and Handel

Friday, November 11, 8:15 pm, Upper Tincum Lutheran Church, 188 Upper Tincum Church Road, Upper Black Eddy, PA 18972

Sunday, November 13, 3 pm, Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901

Admission: Adults \$18, Students and Seniors \$15, Children \$5

For information: 610-294-9361 or www.lenapechamberensemble.org

Purely Farm's Thanksgiving Turkey

Purely Farm is taking reservations for their famed Thanksgiving Turkeys. These wonderful birds are raised by the Michini Family themselves and offer legendary flavor and an exciting alternative to the antibiotic pumped, factory farmed conventional turkeys that are sadly pushed onto so many Americans' tables. Purely Turkey is organically fed, pasture-raised, and amazingly fresh. How fresh you ask??? Any fresher you'd take home the gobble! All turkeys will be processed less than a week before Thanksgiving and available for pick up at 4 convenient locations as well as on their farm in Ottsville. Get your order in while supplies last!

In addition to whole turkeys Purely Farm will also offer a variety of turkey cuts that can either add a little extra meat to your meal or help feed a smaller gathering. As always Purely Farm will also have a full spread of their yummy pasture-raised meats, turkey bone broth and pork and lamb sausages available when you purchase your turkey. One stop shopping of pasture-raised meats at it's best, let Purely Farm help make this Thanksgiving Feast a truly memorable meal!

An order form is attached to this week's Current.

Pipersville Free Library Book Sale

November 3rd – 5th 2016

Sale held at Christ Lutheran Church, 353 E Dark Hollow Road, Pipersville, PA

Thursday, Nov 3rd, 7-9pm (Pre-sale event, \$10 at the door, live music & snacks), Friday, Nov 4th, 10am-7pm
Saturday, Nov 5th, 9am- 3pm

For more info, call 215-766-7880. *Accepting donations at library thru 10/30. No encyclopedias, textbooks or magazines please.*

Lotus School Open House – Wednesday, October 26

We opened the Lotus School of the Liberal Arts with a very specific mission in mind: A high school that provides a comprehensive liberal arts education and supports each student with individualized instruction, cooperative learning, and emotional support. It is a community rooted in the practices of mindfulness and zen as expressed through academic study, meditation, martial arts, yoga, healthy living, and kindness.

We have done this before, in the recently closed Tinicum Art and Science High School. Our staff brings two decades of experience in mindfulness-based education, as well as a host of other practices that have proven to be very effective in bringing together dynamic cognitive skills and emotional grounding.

As a therapist, teacher, and parent myself, I understand how important a range of high school options is for teenagers. Many kids have complex profiles of strengths and challenges. At Lotus, we believe that we fill a crucial niche in the spectrum of schools our region offers.

I genuinely hope that our school can become a significant resource for you, whether you recommend us to friends, clients, or are interested in Lotus for your own children. We are holding an open house for prospective students and their families on Wed, October 26 from 2 until 6 pm. We will provide an overview of our program, an introduction to our staff, and some delicious food. Please see the attached document for more information about how we might meet the needs of our kids.

Warmly,
Peter Ryan, M. Sc.,
Principal

Self-Directed Education Seminar

Info Session: Do you know a teen who is bored or frustrated with school? Are you looking for a welcoming community? Find out about self-directed learning, an alternative to traditional school. November 3rd, 7:00-8:00pm, Flemington, NJ

Presentation: Speaker Will Richardson, best selling educational author and former teacher, will give a talk on why self-directed education is critical for young people and why it is needed now more than ever. November 9th, 7:30-8:30pm, Lawrenceville, NJ

Hosted by Princeton, Bucks & Raritan Learning Cooperatives - Personalized Learning Communities for Teens. www.LearningCooperatives.org All events are free and open to the public. Teens welcome.

Contact MaryBeth Healy 908-672-3455

At Yoga Loka

Yin Yoga Workshop with Sally Miller

Sunday 11/13, 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Awaken a new level of flexibility with this 2-hour journey through your inner-most self. Yin Yoga uses long-held, passive yoga postures to atune and clear the body. This workshop will also include meditation and time for Q&A.

Stress Relief & Deep Relaxation with TRE & Yoga Nidra with Gail Seckrettar

Thursdays 6:30pm - 7:45pm. Begins 11/3,10,17

Help lessen the pre-holiday stress with this 3-session series.

TRE (Tension/Trauma Releasing Exercises) is a self-regulation technique that allows you to release deep muscular patterns of tension stored in your body. Complete your stress release with the guided, deep relaxation meditation practice of Yoga Nidra.

For more information and to register visit www.Yoga-Loka.com

AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

I asked an unanswerable question. "What would it be like to be one of the 65 million people, many of whom are children, who lost their homes or were forced to leave their homes to flee from war, violence, or persecution?" After years of 'turning off the bad news' I began to investigate the global refugee situation. To see such a degree of suffering, brutality and struggle to simply live, daily, was unbearable, for me. It motivated me to give what I could to some of the organizations trying to help and to keep a space in my awareness and heart open to the experiences of others. I wanted to share that opportunity with our community.

Two organizations that are helping:

Doctors Without Borders (MSF)

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>

Save the Children

http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpl4E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official_USA_Site.htm

No amount is too small. Very small amounts can add up and go quite a long way. If you would like to give but do not want to do the 'official business' feel free to pass funds to me and I will send it directly to MSF, or if you prefer, Save the Children. Thank you for reading, Tara Bowers (Alice's mom, 3rd grade)

Yellowberry Holiday Bazaar Booth

Peyton Kovach, 6th grade, will be selling Yellowberry at the Holiday Bazaar. Check out this company - their mission is to empower girls and young women, inspire them to be comfortable with their own bodies, and to celebrate youth.

<https://www.yellowberrycompany.com/>

80s Halloween Costume Ball



From The Atlantic Magazine

The New Preschool Is Crushing Kids

Today's young children are working more, but they're learning less

By Erika Christakis

Step into an American preschool classroom today and you are likely to be bombarded with what we educators call a print-rich environment, every surface festooned with alphabet charts, bar graphs, word walls, instructional posters, classroom rules, calendars, schedules, and motivational platitudes—few of which a 4-year-old can “decode,” the contemporary word for what used to be known as reading.

Because so few adults can remember the pertinent details of their own preschool or kindergarten years, it can be hard to appreciate just how much the early-education landscape has been transformed over the past two decades. The changes are not restricted to the confusing pastiche on classroom walls. Pedagogy and curricula have changed too, most recently in response to the Common Core State Standards Initiative's kindergarten guidelines. Much greater portions of the day are now spent on what's called “seat work” (a term that probably doesn't need any exposition) and a form of tightly scripted teaching known as direct instruction, formerly used mainly in the older grades, in which a teacher carefully controls the content and pacing of what a child is supposed to learn.

One study, titled “Is Kindergarten the New First Grade?,” compared kindergarten teachers' attitudes nationwide in 1998 and 2010 and found that the percentage of teachers expecting children to know how to read by the end of the year had risen from 30 to 80 percent. The researchers also reported more time spent with workbooks and worksheets, and less time devoted to music and art. Kindergarten is indeed the new first grade, the authors concluded glumly. In turn, children who would once have used the kindergarten year as a gentle transition into school are in some cases being held back before they've had a chance to start. A study out of Mississippi found that in some counties, more than 10 percent of kindergartners weren't allowed to advance to first grade.

Until recently, school-readiness skills weren't high on anyone's agenda, nor was the idea that the youngest learners might be disqualified from moving on to a subsequent stage. But now that kindergarten serves as a gatekeeper, not a welcome mat, to elementary school, concerns about school preparedness kick in earlier and earlier. A child who's supposed to read by the end of kindergarten had better be getting ready in preschool. As a result, expectations that may arguably have been reasonable for 5- and 6-year-olds, such as being able to sit at a desk and complete a task using pencil and paper, are now directed at even younger children, who lack the motor skills and attention span to be successful.

Preschool classrooms have become increasingly fraught spaces, with teachers cajoling their charges to finish their “work” before they can go play. And yet, even as preschoolers are learning more pre-academic skills at earlier ages, I've heard many teachers say that they seem somehow—is it possible?—less inquisitive and less engaged than the kids of earlier generations. More children today seem to lack the language skills needed to retell a simple story or to use basic connecting words and prepositions. They can't make a conceptual analogy between, say, the veins on a leaf and the veins in their own hands.

New research sounds a particularly disquieting note. A major evaluation of Tennessee's publicly funded preschool system, published in September, found that although children who had attended preschool initially exhibited more “school readiness” skills when they entered kindergarten than did their non-preschool-attending peers, by the time they were in first grade their attitudes toward school were deteriorating. And by second grade they performed worse on tests measuring literacy, language, and math skills. The researchers told New York magazine that overreliance on direct instruction and repetitive, poorly structured pedagogy were likely culprits; children who'd been subjected to the same insipid tasks year after year after year were understandably losing their enthusiasm for learning.

That's right. The same educational policies that are pushing academic goals down to ever earlier levels seem to be contributing to—while at the same time obscuring—the fact that young children are gaining fewer skills, not more...

Finish reading the article at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/01/the-new-preschool-is-crushing-kids/419139/>