



River Valley Current

November 18, 2014 No. 394

*Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.
- John F. Kennedy*

School Calendar

This Week

Thursday, Nov 20

School Tour 9:00 am

Friday, Nov 21

Fall Assembly 6:30 pm

Saturday, Nov 22

Bridgeton Hill Holiday Bazaar 11:00 am-4:00 pm

Looking Ahead

Monday & Tuesday, Nov 24 & 25

No School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

November 26, 27, 28

No School – Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, Dec 5

Spiral of Light – in-school celebration

Thursday, Dec 11

School Tour 9:00 am

Friday, Dec 12

Early Dismissal-Winter Fair set-up 1:00 pm

Saturday, Dec 13

Winter Fair 11:00 am-4:00pm

Sunday, Dec 14

5th grade Workday

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org

lc@rivervalleyschool.org

bot@rivervalleyschool.org

pc@rivervalleyschool.org

Parent Council Update

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on November 19th at 6:30 at the Ship Inn in Milford, NJ

Important Lunch/Pizza News

Beginning in December, Pizza Day will move to Thursday because Grandy will begin serving lunches on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Order forms for lunch in December and Pizza beginning in January are attached to this week's Current.

Fall Assembly

Friday evening, November 21st at 6:30 pm

Please join grades 2-8 for our annual Fall Assembly. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the Waldorf curriculum through the grades. Relatives and friends as well as Early Childhood families are all welcome.

Children who are performing are asked to arrive at 6 pm in their classrooms dressed in festive attire.

Bridgeton Hill Holiday Bazaar & Café Saturday, November 22nd, from 11am - 4pm

You're sure to find something for everyone amongst more than 30 carefully selected local artisans & vendors.

Browse through a cornucopia brimming with jewelry, beeswax candles, handmade dolls & doll clothes, pottery, felted fairies, henna, hand-knit items, natural cleaning products, hand-crafted brooms, handmade toys, wooden treasures, artful notecards, luxurious soaps, up-cycled clothing, Ulla's BAGS, papercrafts and....

Delicious wholesome food by Nelli Rae's Kitchen!

Winter Fair is Saturday December 13th 11am – 4pm

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration. 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 classroom coordinator should know your activity by now 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. Please remember we need 20 Secret Garden items from each family to help further this feeling of awe and wonder. These items can be small and preferably homemade. A list of potential items can be found in the Parent Handbook. Also Mary K Till, our handwork teacher, is having craft workshops for parents to come and make some treasures for Secret Garden (dates and times can be found in the Current).

Please contact your classroom coordinator or the Winter Fair committee, Rebecca Brown, Clare Brunell, Kymm Phibbs or pc@rivervalleyschool.org with any questions you may have.

From Administration

Opening for Development Coordinator (Part-time)

Jill McMullen will be leaving her post as Development Coordinator as soon as the position is filled. If you are interested in applying, please speak to Brian Wolff.

River Valley Waldorf School is accepting applications to fill a part-time Development Coordinator position to start immediately. Responsibilities include leading and managing all fundraising activities, including the annual appeal and the yearly auction event. This person will work closely with the Board and Administrator to develop both short and long term organizational fundraising strategies for the school. This person will coordinate all efforts of the Development Committee and report to the Board on a monthly basis. The Development Coordinator manages the tracking of all contributions, sending of thank you letters and creating a simple annual report. This position will be approximately 10 hours per week.

Qualifications:

- A good understanding of the benefits of Waldorf education
- Bachelor's degree and three years' experience in annual fundraising and some experience in raising major gifts or high-end annual appeal gifts
- Solid communication skills, including writing, editing and proofreading
- Ability to manage multiple projects, priorities and deadlines
- Ability to work collaboratively and creatively with parent volunteers
- Proficiency with eTapestry or other fundraising software is desirable

Interested applicants should submit cover letter, resume and three references to: bwolff@rivervalleyschool.org

Shop at Giant Food Store?

There's a really easy way to raise funds for RVWS, every time you shop at Giant and use your Giant member card. Just register your member card on their website.

Here is the link:

<http://www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus/>

Our school ID number is: 06546

If you registered last year you do not have to re-register this year.

This is an easy way to earn money for RVWS without any cost to you, so please register right away!

Shop at ShopRite?

You can register to earn e-Box Tops for River Valley! This is Box Tops earnings in addition to the paper ones we collect. Go to the link below to register.

<http://shopriteformyschool.com/>

Condolences

We send our condolences to the Tynan family (Logan, G3 and Georgia, G2) on the passing of Lizette's father. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Donations

We have received several donations so far this year from purchases that parents have made. From Target-Take Charge of Education we received \$84.06, from Uriel, \$42.40 and we just sent off a big box of used print cartridges and cellphones. Small checks add up so thank you for your continued support of these programs.

Thank You

Thank you Elena Valta for all of your hard work with Act 195. You spent hours wrestling with a government website and inexperienced vendors and you made it all come together before the deadline. Our school is much richer for all of the books and supplies you made it possible for us to receive. We appreciate your perseverance.

Thank you David Goodyear for sharing your experience and expertise with LC during our Human Resources in-service meeting. It was very helpful.

From the Leadership Council

What are we working on?

- Grades teacher "looping" with TDC, preparing for community meeting.
- Mentoring and Teacher Development with TDC
- Strategic Planning and Site Planning with Board and Faculty
- Early Childhood programs with EC faculty
- Human Resources in-service with David Goodyear

From the Faculty

WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Language Arts
Second Grade: Language Arts
Third Grade: Math/Shelters/Hebrew Stories
Fourth Grade: Language Arts/Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade: North American History and Geography
Sixth Grade: History
Seventh Grade: Algebra
Eighth Grade: Chemistry

Get Ready for Winter Fair Secret Garden and Learn New Crafts!

Get your Secret Garden treasures finished early. Join Miss Till in the Handwork room Friday mornings after drop off, 9 am-10:15 am, on Saturday, November 22nd, 9:30-11 before the Holiday Bazaar and Friday morning, December 5th while waiting for the Spiral of Light. Cost is \$10 for materials. Please RSVP to Miss Till (MKT4160@yahoo.com) or leave her a note at the Handwork Room.

Spiral of Light

The Spiral of Light is a simple, yet reverent tradition at River Valley as it is at many other Waldorf schools. We will be celebrating it this year as an in-school festival on Friday, December 5th with time for the kindergartens and all eight grades to participate. Families are welcome to attend their child's session.

The sessions of the classes are as follows:

9:00 Seventh/Eighth Grade

9:40 Star Room

10:20 Moon Room

11:00 Second Grade

11:40 Fifth/Sixth Grade

1:10 First Grade

1:40 Third Grade

2:20 Fourth Grade

At River Valley and many other Waldorf schools the Spiral of Light is a beautiful seasonal event celebrated in a quiet and meditative mood. In our All Purpose Room teachers lay out a large spiral path of evergreen boughs adorned with sparkling crystals, shells and large pine cones. Interspersed along the edges of the spiral are tree stumps and at the center of the spiral is placed a large white candle. During the event the room is darkened and gentle harp music is played. Each child in turn, holding a red apple with an unlit candle inserted into it, slowly walks along the spiral path and lights the candle from the center light. (The youngest children are assisted by a guiding angel.) On the return walk each child places the candle on a tree stump along the edge of the spiral. When all the children have had a turn, the spiral is aglow with light. A few moments are taken at this time to contemplate the beauty of the spiral. The children then return silently to their classrooms. For those who experience or watch this deeply meaningful journey from darkness to light hope glows brightly that, after winter's darkness, light will be born anew.

Spiral of Light Crystals

If you have large beautiful crystals you would lend us to make the Spiral of Light sparkle, please label them and leave them in the faculty room by Thursday, December 4th. They will be there available for pick-up again on Monday, December 8th. Thank you!

From Parent Council

Secret Garden Items

There will be a basket in the lobby later this week to collect everyone's Secret Garden items.

Winter Fair Café Stage!

We're working on another wonderful lineup of musical entertainment for the Winter Fair Café Stage. If you're interested in performing, in joining the RVWS parent choir (no experience necessary), or if you know a musician in the community we should contact, please email Kira Willey (kirawilley@rcn.com). All students wishing to perform on their own, or in small groups, must see Mrs. Diven. Thanks!

Class Fundraisers

8G Trip Fundraiser: Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: You are a Super Parent. But lack of sleep and too much work mean that you are flat out on healthy snack ideas. *Solution:* Send kids to school with a couple bucks for 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: You deliver your jewels to school before class begins but your caffeine buzz, alarmingly, is wearing off. *Solution:* Get a cup of high-octane joe and a slice of pumpkin bread to go thanks to 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

Problem: Your darlings are exhausted and their blood sugar levels are precipitously dropping at pick up. *Solution:* Don't call Dr. Jo. Grab a warm baby burrito for the ride home at 8G Snack Mondays & Wednesdays!

8G snack offerings EVERY Monday and Wednesday morning and afternoon in the lobby at drop-off and pick-up:

Hummus w/Carrot & Celery sticks \$2.75

Organic Corn Chips \$1

Organic Chips & Salsa \$1.75

Cheese Cubes \$1.50

Slice of homemade sweet bread (pumpkin, banana,...) \$2

Warm Ready-to-Eat Baby Burrito \$3

Homemade Beef Jerky \$2

From the Community

Snowplow?

Looking for a parent with a snow plow.
Contact Kymm Phibbs @ 267-337-0636.

Yoga Loka

Thanksgiving Day Benefit Class
Thursday November 27th, 10:00 am-12 noon
All collected funds will go to the Frenchtown Food Pantry. Suggested donation is \$20 (any and all donations will be accepted, early donations appreciated!)
Asana with Bonnie Pariser accompanied with live music by Heidi Beyer and poetry with Warren Cooper
See www.Yoga-Loka.com for more information

Rieglesville Library Fall Used Book Sale

Saturday, November 22nd & 29th – 9am – 3pm
(\$5.00/bag sale 2-3pm)
Early Bird Event on Friday, Nov 21st 7-9pm
Refreshments Served
\$5.00 donation at the door. Community Room of the Rieglesville Library/Boro Hall
615 Easton Road, Rieglesville, PA
For more info call 610.749.2357 or
www.booksalefinder.com

In Search of A Large Dog Crate

Do you have an large dog crate hiding in your garage or basement that you no longer have use for? Would you be interested in selling it? We have two large puppies and only one crate! The Bell Family is looking for a crate that is approximately 42" long x 31 1/2" high x 28" deep. Contact Melanie Bell via phone or text at (215) 341-6214

14" "Pure Fun" Trampoline for Sale

Like new! Vinyl; made with strong, rust-resistant, galvanized iron steel tubing using patented T-Section construction; snug, secure fit of T-Section assembly ensures extra stability and prevents shifting over time, W-shaped legs offer eight balanced contact points which add stability and prevent wobbling or tipping, 14-foot, 88-spring trampoline is easy to assemble and requires no tools or extra drilling, high-performance steel springs provide deeper, more exciting bounce, includes double-spring set and all-weather cover. Price - \$150.

Call or text Mike at 609-672-3304 or Karen at 609-851-6539.

To see a picture, look on our school bulletin board.

The Bel Canto Children's Chorus Presents:

Jazz - A musical journey from classical to Jazz

December 6th at 4pm - St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 81 Main St. Pennsburg, PA
Join us for an exciting concert that highlights music from the classics to jazz and blues.
Selections include Bach "Domine Deus", David Conte's "Hope Carol", as well as some jazzy arrangements of classic holiday songs "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas."
Tickets available at the door. Adults \$12, Student/Seniors \$10. For more information, please visit www.belcantochildren.com info@belcantochildren.com

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center Events

Friday December 19

House Concert with Lissa, Glen and Bethany

Saturday December 20th

Workshop/Concert with Daniel Hawkins

Wednesdays

Mirjam Ingolfsson...Cello lessons in collaboration with Daniel Hawkins

For lesson information contact mirjam.ingolfsson@gmail.com

Mondays

Afternoon Lessons with Jane Rothfield - Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo beginners and advanced students welcome. For lesson information contact janerothfield@gmail.com

Wednesday Jams / Song swaps 6:00-8:00

Please join the Jam! All levels welcome. Bring strings, pipes, squeezebox whatever you got! Tunes and songs, \$5 suggested donation. ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com for song and tunes selections.

Check out our Ottsville Tradarts Calendar of events for more Information. ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com danielhhawkins.com. OTAC 250 Durham Road Ottsville across from Kimberton Whole Foods

SAVE THE DATE Thurs, Dec. 11th, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

The Giving Bowl

Palisades High School Cafeteria

Enjoy a Bottomless Bowl of Soup & Endless Salad, Bread, and Beverage. PLUS As our gift to you, select a handmade ceramic bowl created by Palisades' students and community members.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. \$5 for children 10 years and younger – Meal Only Limited Seating - Please help us put an end to hunger. Proceeds will benefit local food pantries and those in need who live within the Palisades School District. Join us for this ART to HEART project!

Questions or need reservations for a particular time? Please call (610) 847-5131, x2431 – Ms. Leslie Patience

Roxey Ballet Nutcracker Production

Gunna Christensen (7th grade) and Sven Christensen (3rd grade) are very excited to be in this year's performance of The Nutcracker by the Roxey Ballet. Gunna and Sven will be in the 1st act party scene and Gunna will be a Chinese dancer and Sven a Russian page in the 2nd act in Saturday performances. Ainsley Mulligan will be in the party scene on Saturdays and a Sugar Plum page on Sundays. Former student Gabe Blaikie will be Fritz and Gabe's dad Tim will be Drosselmeyer (not sure which performance).

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased on www.roxeyballet.org or discount tickets at: www.spinsaver.com.

Hope to see some of our RV friends, Leah Christensen

For Rent

3 story townhouse with 3 bedrooms and 4 baths. Finished walk-out basement with brick flooring. Large backyard with wooden deck and patio. Spectacular views of the Lehigh River and 4th of July fireworks. 5 minutes from downtown Bethlehem and 25 minutes from River Valley.

For more information, please contact Katherine Schilling at 347-724-8724 or katubela211@yahoo.com

MUSIC TEACHER AVAILABLE FOR HOUSE CALLS!

Paul Kendall is a Jazz musician and teacher available for private instruction in your home. Expertise includes Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello & Piano.

Recommended by Louanne Willard & Stephanie Smith, Mr. Kendall has been teaching the Willard & Smith children individually for over a year in the disciplines of Flute, Violin, Piano & Cello. Please feel free to contact Mr. Kendall directly & mention that you are a RVWS student referred by Louanne and/or Stephanie.

Paul Kendall phone: 570-839-8975
kendalljazz@yahoo.com kendalljazz.com

"You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees or the stars...."

Is there anything more lovely than time-honored words of wisdom lettered beautifully by hand? Catherine Lent is delighted to offer a new limited-edition calligraphic print of Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata," or desired things. Chock full of good advice ("Be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others..." as well as "Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself."), this poem has been cherished and shared by many for generations, and is now rendered in full-color calligraphy in a palette of watercolor blue, green, purple, and burgundy hues. Each print is embellished by hand with gold accents, signed and numbered by the artist, and accompanied with a certificate of authenticity. Available alone, matted, or framed, the artwork is 13 by 15 inches, 16 by 20 matted or framed. The regular prices are \$60, matted \$78, and framed \$165. Contact Catherine at 908-328-4460 or catherine@calligraphybycatherine.com for images of the artwork, mat and frame options, and any other information you might need.

Art in the Library

Making the Most of Color - Inspired by the Masters

with Ponder Goembel, Monday, December 1 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Open to Older Teens and Adults

This workshop is designed to help students draw with oil pastels in a rich and vibrant manner inspired by the work of Van Gogh, Monet, and other famous painters. We will discuss the use of color in flower paintings by the masters and continue with a demonstration of mixing colors and how to juxtapose them to produce rich and vibrant art. Supplies will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. Please bring a smock to class!

Ponder Goembel is a classically trained, sought after illustrator whose work has been featured in dozens of books. Her wonderful illustrations have earned her notable reviews and honors in the publishing world. She resides in Bucks County, PA.

Drawing the Portrait in Charcoal

with George Thompson, Tuesday, December 16 6:00pm – 9:00pm

All levels welcome Open to ages 16 - adult

This three-hour workshop is an introduction to one of most challenging and exciting subjects in art--the human head. We will break down the fundamentals and simplify the anatomy. Step-by-step, we will draw the eye, nose, ears, and mouth and discover the proportions of the face and how to get a likeness from a live model. (Please bring your own supplies. Let us know if you don't have your own so that supplies and materials can be provided.)

George Thompson is a nationally recognized, award-winning artist specializing in figure/portrait, landscape, and still life.

Thompson has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Pratt Institute, and has studied figure drawing and painting at The Art Students League, and The Brooklyn Museum. www.georgethompsongallery.com

Introduction to Monoprinting

with Tracy Cianciola, Wednesday, December 3 11:00am – 2:00pm

Open to Older Teens and Adults

This workshop will begin with an interactive demonstration to show the steps taken to produce a monoprint; then everyone will create their own monoprints under the guidance of the artist/instructor. Please bring a smock to class. We will take a lunch break—please bring bagged lunch

Tracy Cianciola received her bachelor's degree from The School of Visual Arts in New York and later earned her master's degree from Lehman College. Her work has been seen in many art shows throughout the country, including the prestigious Portfolio 10/Society of Illustrators.

The workshops will be held in the Community Room at Riegelsville Borough Hall, 615 Easton Road. To sign up or for more information, please contact the Riegelsville Library 610-749-2357 or 610-749-2158. RiegelsvilleLibrary.info

Waldorf News from Waldorftoday.com

Is Google Making Students Stupid?

Outsourcing menial tasks to machines can seem liberating, but it may be robbing a whole generation of certain basic mental abilities.

By Nick Romeo

One of the oldest metaphors for human interaction with technology is the relationship of master and slave. Aristotle imagined that technology could replace slavery if devices like the loom became automated. In the 19th century, Oscar Wilde foresaw a future when machines performed all dull and unpleasant labor, freeing humanity to amuse itself by "making beautiful things," or simply "contemplating the world with admiration and delight." Marx and Engels saw things differently. "Masses of laborers are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine," they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*. Machines had not saved us from slavery; they had become a means of enslavement.

Today, computers often play both roles. Nicholas Carr, the author of the 2008 *Atlantic* cover story "Is Google Making Us Stupid?", confronts this paradox in his new book, *The Glass Cage: Automation and Us*, analyzing the many contemporary fields in which software assists human cognition, from medical diagnostic aids to architectural modeling programs. As its title suggests, the book also takes a stand on whether such technology imprisons or liberates its users. We are increasingly encaged, he argues, but the invisibility of our high-tech snares gives us the illusion of freedom. As evidence, he cites the case of Inuit hunters in northern Canada. Older generations could track caribou through the tundra with astonishing precision by noticing subtle changes in winds, snowdrift patterns, stars, and animal behavior. Once younger hunters began using snowmobiles and GPS units, their navigational prowess declined. They began trusting the GPS devices so completely that they ignored blatant dangers, speeding over cliffs or onto thin ice. And when a GPS unit broke or its batteries froze, young hunters who had not developed and practiced the wayfinding skills of their elders were uniquely vulnerable.

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Carr includes other case studies: He describes doctors who become so reliant on decision-assistance software that they overlook subtle signals from patients or dismiss improbable but accurate diagnoses. He interviews architects whose drawing skills decay as they transition to digital platforms. And he recounts frightening instances when commercial airline pilots fail to perform simple corrections in emergencies because they are so used to trusting the autopilot system. Carr is quick to acknowledge that these technologies often do enhance and assist human skills. But he makes a compelling case that our relationship with them is not as positive as we might think.

Something meant to expedite a task winds up being an indispensable technology

All of this has unmistakable implications for the use of technology in classrooms: When do technologies free students to think about more interesting and complex questions, and when do they erode the very cognitive capacities they are meant to enhance? The effect of ubiquitous spell check and AutoCorrect software is a revealing example. Psychologists studying the formation of memories have found that the act of generating a word in your mind strengthens your capacity to remember it. When a computer automatically corrects a spelling mistake or offers a drop-down menu of options, we're no longer forced to generate the correct spelling in our minds. This might not seem very important. If writers don't clutter their minds with often-bizarre English spelling conventions, this might give them more energy to consider interesting questions of style and structure. But the process of word generation is not just supplementing spelling skills; it's also eroding them. When students find themselves without automated spelling assistance, they don't face the prospect of freezing to death, as the Inuits did when their GPS malfunctioned, but they're more likely to make errors.

The solution might seem to be improving battery life and making spelling assistance even more omnipresent, but this creates a vicious cycle: The more we use the technology, the more we need to use it in all circumstances. Suddenly, our position as masters of technology starts to seem more precarious.

Relying on calculators to perform arithmetic has had similar risks and benefits. Automating the time-consuming work of multiplying and dividing large numbers by hand can allow students to spend time and energy on more complex mathematical subjects. But depending on calculators in classrooms can also lead students to forget how to do the operations that the machines perform. Once again, something meant to expedite a task winds up being an indispensable technology.

The phenomenon is not specific to modern technologies; the same concern appears in Plato's *Phaedrus*, where a character in the dialogue worries about the effects of the phonetic alphabet: "This discovery ... will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves." Automating almost any task can rob us of an ability.

The difference today is the sheer breadth of mental tasks that have been outsourced to machines. Carr describes a 2004 study in which two groups of subjects played a computer game based on the logic puzzle Missionaries and Cannibals. Solving the puzzle required figuring out how to transport five missionaries and five cannibals across a river in a boat that could hold only three passengers. The cannibals, for self-evident reasons, could not outnumber missionaries on either of the riverbanks or in the boat.

The more we use the technology, the more we need to use it in all circumstances

The first group of players used a sophisticated software program that offered prompts and guidance on permissible moves in given scenarios. The second group used a simple program that gave no assistance. Initially, those using the helpful software made rapid progress, but over time those using the more basic software made fewer wrong moves and solved the puzzle more efficiently. The psychologist running the study concluded that those who received less assistance were more likely to develop a better understanding of the game's rules and strategize accordingly.

As all good teachers know, students need to experience confusion and struggle in order to internalize certain principles. That's why teachers avoid rushing in to assist students at the first hint of incomprehension. It's neither necessary nor possible to abolish calculators and spellcheck programs in classrooms, but periodically removing these tools can help ensure that students use technology in order to free their minds for more interesting tasks—not because they can't spell or compute without assistance.

Carr notes that the word "robot" derives from *robotā*, a Czech term for servitude. His book is a valuable reminder that if we don't carefully examine the process that makes us dependent on technology, our position in the master-servant relationship can become the opposite of what we imagine.