



River Valley Current

December 6, 2016 No. 462

*"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."
~ Edith Wharton*

School Calendar

This Week

Wednesday, December 7

School Tour 9:00-11:00 am

Friday, December 9

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

Saturday, December 10

Winter Fair 11:00am-4:00 pm

Friday, December 16

Winter Concert 6:30 pm

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, December 20

6th grade to Planetarium
Shepherds Play 7:00 pm

Wednesday, December 21

Shepherds Play 1:30 pm

Thursday, Dec. 22 – Tuesday, Jan. 3

No School – Holiday Vacation

Wednesday, January 4

School Resumes

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org
lc@rivervalleyschool.org
bot@rivervalleyschool.org
pc@rivervalleyschool.org

Friday Afternoon Early Dismissal Bus Schedule

Because of our 1 pm early dismissal there will be no Palisades or Quakertown buses at the end of the day. The Pennridge bus will pick up at 1 pm.

Winter Fair Flyers and Postcards

Flyers for Winter Fair are attached to this week's Current and postcards are available at school. Please help spread the word.

Diversity Committee Meeting

This Thursday, 4:30 to 6.
All welcome!

Winter Fair!!

This Saturday, December 10th, 11-4

Please drop off your **20 Secret Garden Items** in the box in the lobby this week! **See this week's "From Parent Council" for Craft ideas.**

The Gingerbread Tea Room needs Gingerbread Cookies!

If you are able, please bake 2 batches of small gingerbread people. Cookies can be left in the kitchen on Friday, Dec. 9th. If you need a recipe, Early Childhood has a good one.

King Winter is in need of your Flexible Flyer sleds! If you have any to lend, please place your name on the bottom of the sled with masking tape and drop them off outside the front door, in the corner.

Please sign up on the Sign up Board!!! We need at least 1 parent from each family to do a shift. If you do not know what activity your class is doing, check the board - it will tell you! If all the slots are taken, please volunteer for whatever activity shift you like.

Remember - each class needs to start setting up Fri, Dec. 10th at 1 pm after the children have been dismissed. Children in middle school may stay with parents to help set up and help around the school as needed. Parents of children younger than 4th grade should arrange for their children not to be on the premises to maintain the wonders and mysteries of King Winter. Some classes arrange for playdates. Please check with your Festival Coordinator.

Holiday Candlelight Concert Friday, December 16th 6:30 pm



Please join us for River Valley's annual Holiday Concert. Children in grades 4 through 8 will perform

as the audience is bathed in candlelight, songs and good cheer.

Children who are performing need to be in their classrooms by 6 pm dressed in concert attire (See Parent Handbook for details).

If your child is not performing, please plan to bring your family for an inspirational holiday celebration.

Come See the Shepherds Play at RVWS

**Tuesday, December 20th at 7 pm and
Wednesday, December 21st at 1:30 pm**

Every year members of the faculty, staff, and parent body perform the Oberufer Shepherds Play as a gift for the children. The play dates back to the 16th century when it was performed on the island of Oberufer in the Danube River near the borders of Germany, Austria, and Hungary. Please plan to bring family and friends to experience this humorous, magical play.

From Administration

2 Weeks Left to Try Capoeira for 5th-8th Graders – New Session Starts in January

The trial period for Capoeira lasts until our holiday break so there are two more classes left to sample. Word has it that they are lively and lots of fun. Classes cost \$15 each and the registration form can be found on the wall next to the office.

After our holiday break Capoeira will begin again on Monday, January 9th and the session will run for 5 weeks until February 6th. A registration form for the winter session is attached to this week's Current.

Piano – Free to a Good Home

The piano in the hallway outside the door of the music room is looking for a home. It is ugly, but plays quite well and it needs to find a new home as soon as possible. If you are interested please stop by the office or call the school.

High School Open Houses

Many high schools in our area and beyond are holding Open Houses this fall. Here is a list for parents and students who are interested.

Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts Open House: Tuesday, Jan. 5 at 5:45 pm. The program begins promptly at 6:30 pm.

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.

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Language Arts - Fables

Third Grade – Language Arts

Fourth Grade – Human Being & Animal World

Fifth Grade – North American Studies

Sixth Grade – Astronomy

Seventh Grade – Chemistry

Eighth Grade – Algebra

From Parent Council

There are Still a Few Days Left to Submit Your Secret Garden Items for Winter Fair!

Winter Fair is right around the corner and we need your Secret Garden items from natural materials to make the children's visit to King Winter and the Secret Garden a joy. When completed, please deliver to the Secret Garden box in the school lobby. Please don't use edible food, especially nuts or nut shells in making these items. Acorn caps or acorns are acceptable.

Ideas for Secret Garden Items

Made from Fabric & Wool

Sachets/pouches, angels, gnomes, fairies, crocheted or knitted items such as pins, bags, stars, dolls, animals, hair ties, hair bands, bandanas, bookmarks, pin cushions, pot holders, potpourri bags, yarn dolls, bells with ribbons, beanbags, wool sheep or other animals, felt stars & hearts, feltball necklaces & bracelets, bracelets, tree or window ornaments, felt mice, animals, candle holder decorations.

Made from Paper

Little cards and books, bookmarks, recipe cards, stars & snowflakes, folded boxes, origami figures.

Other Materials

Beeswax candles, figures or animals, wooden, paper, or glass bead bracelets, clothes pin gnomes and fairies, clay beads, necklaces, coins, wooden stars and snowflakes, key-chains with beads, magnets covered by stones, shells, painted rocks, wooden figurines, candle holders, twig or pinecone gnomes, magic wands, jewelry pins, pipe cleaner animals/figures, shell necklaces, bracelets, pins, dried & decorated orange slices and little soaps.

From the Diversity Committee

Diversity Committee Meeting

We will be meeting this Thursday, 4:30 to 6. All are welcome!

Video Share from the Diversity Committee

Alison Goodman sent us this short video to share with River Valley parents. In a light and non-confrontational way, it outlines the reason that it is important for all of us to remember & take into consideration, the life experiences of those who are different from ourselves. This video is intended for adult eyes only – or perhaps your middle-schooler. Thank you for having a look!

Link to the video: <https://www.google.com/search?q=sometimes+you're+a+caterpillar&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&hl=en-us&client=safari>

From the Community

At Yoga Loka

Winter Solstice Celebration

Wednesday December 21st, 6:30-8:30 pm. Cost is \$25.

The Winter Solstice marks the shortest, darkest day of the year - it is a time to draw inward and nurture ourselves. Join us for a special night of inner exploration. Asana, meditation and intention setting will be a part of the experience. A deep relaxation accompanied by the soothing sounds from John Muraco will close the practice. Appropriate for all levels. Stay for tea after. Reservations are required by 12/19. www.Yoga-Loka.com

Yoga Lounge

Now that the weather is getting chilly come in early for a cup of hot tea and warm conversation. Yoga Loka is opening its doors early for the community to gather and come together. For over a decade Yoga Loka has been the place where neighbors exchange ideas and thoughts, where advice is sought and given, and where life-long friendships have been created. We are nurturing that tradition with an official gathering time before selected classes. Come by early- before you need to run off to start the errands or the work day, or come in right after you drop the kids off at school.

The small room will be open for peaceful meditation or contemplation. The large room will be available for pre-class savasana, and the comfy couch will be yours to sit on and enjoy a hot beverage from our selection of teas and spices and to connect with like-minded people.

8:35 am Wednesdays and Fridays

***For a limited time we are offering River Valley families a 20% discount on class blocks. Use code RV2016 if booking online or at the studio. Discount applies to all classes on the schedule except workshops. www.Yoga-loka.com

Squeek Goes Adventuring

Hello Waldorf Friends, Christmas is just around the corner. If you have a child or grandchild between the ages of 3 and 8, please consider giving this enchanting picture book as a gift – SQUEEK GOES ADVENTURING is a beautifully illustrated picture book that shares the adventures of a little mouse named Squeek. This young mouse has an insatiable curiosity about the world around him. Through a series of thrilling adventures tied to the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth, Squeek begins the journey of self discovery. Both the author and the illustrator have strong backgrounds in Waldorf Education, and would love to have Squeek share his adventures with your family. It will be a book that your child or grandchild will want to read (or have read to them) again and again.

For more information about the book, please visit our website www.squeekgoesadventuring.com. You can order the book from Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/Squeek-Goes-Adventuring-Olga-Wierbicki/dp/0970895461/ref=sr_1_1?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1471884970&sr=8-1&keywords=Squeek+Goes+Adventuring+book) or send me an email at oeowflw@icx.net and place your order directly with me. I'll be happy to send you an autographed copy. Olga Weirbicki, Emerson Waldorf School, author.

HOMEOPATHIC STUDY GROUP FORMING

If you are interested, contact Lois Dribin, d.hom.
215-297-0203 lois.dribin@gmail.com (aka lolo)

Looking for a Play Kitchen

Has your child outgrown their wooden play kitchen? If so the Berrocals will happily purchase it from you! Contact Ivy @ Karunagoddess@gmail.com OR 201-694-5166.

Travel Opportunities

Sophia Services Presents...

A Goethean Safari in Kenya – Aug. 6th – 20th, 2017

We will try to imagine, and even emulate, how Goethe would have experienced nature in East Africa. This trip will be especially valuable to Waldorf teachers and anyone who has an interest in holistic science.

In Search of Saint Francis of Assisi – July 20th – 29th, 2017

Rudolf Steiner held St. Francis in great esteem. During our visit to Francis' home, the Umbrian hillside town of Assisi, we will spend time exploring why he felt the life of Francis was so important to human development, while at the same time, we will examine the works of others who have also had particular insights into the life of Francis.

For more info, cost and complete itinerary: Samia Guiton at samia@sophiaservices.ca -- 604.740.0676
www.sophiaservices.ca

Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelters

If you or anyone you know is lacking inside shelter in Upper Bucks County during periods of extreme, life-threatening weather (temperature or wind chill of 26°F or below) between November 15 and April 15, your neighbors and friends are ready with an Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter at the Quakertown Masonic Lodge (501 W Broad St, Quakertown, PA 18951) from 9:00 PM to 7:00 AM the following morning. We'll have a hot meal and breakfast for you as well as shelter. Car rides will be provided from the following stops:

- Turkey Hill @ Ottsville/Harrow 8:20 PM
 - Perkasie Square Shopping Center 8:30 PM
- Call 267.450.5191 to request a ride

To find out if the shelter is open, contact the Code Blue Status Line: 267.450.5191 after 1:00 PM
The Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter is a ministry of Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB)

The Nutcracker

Come see an amazing performance and help raise money for our school!

Eden, Daphne and Coco Stuart will be dancing in Budzynski Ballet Company's full production of The Nutcracker at Central Bucks High School South, December 10th and 11th at 12PM or 4PM. Buy tickets at Budzynskiballet.org and enter "River Valley Waldorf School" in the the comments section and \$5 will be donated back to the school for each ticket. And...Tony Stuart is in it too!

Whimsical Rhyming Picture Books by two Steiner Alumni

Steiner parent and Early Childhood teacher collaborate on children's picture books in rhyme. Matt McFlack and His Flyaway Kite is a children's story written in rhyme about a young boy who buys a kite, loses it and then spends the entire day trying to retrieve it. Dance of the Seasons is a lyrical romp in rhyme through the seasons of the year. An ideal holiday gift for new readers! Ideal holiday gifts for young readers. Available on Amazon.com or at KyraRobinov.com.

Wooden Dresser FREE to a good home

If you are interested, I can email/txt you photos. The dresser can be picked up at our home in Erwinna. Tara Bowers: bowersbetara@gmail.com; 908-674-2772

AQUARIUM hand-me-down request...

...for our accidentally won carnival gold fish, who I am told will live up to 20 years and easily grow over one foot! If you have a 30+ gallon aquarium that could use a home, we would be happy for one. Tara Bowers (Alice's mom, grade 3). bowersbetara@gmail.com; 908-674-2772

Poinsettias for Sale

6" Red 5 Bloom \$8, 8" Red - 3 Plants per pot w/ 10+ Blooms \$20, 8" Tricolor - 3 Plants per pot w/ 10+ Blooms \$20, 7" Tricolor 4 Blooms \$15. Also available by the case at lower prices.

To order or for more information, contact: parksideroots@gmail.com, John 267-261-9977, Mark 215-932-5436. Plants available for pick up Saturday December 3rd and 10th. Pick up location at former Parkside Orchids, 2503 Mountainview Dr Ottsville PA 18942, Delivery available by appointment. Cash or check preferred.

Riegelsville Library Upcoming Events

Story Times are weekly on Tuesday @ 10:30 AM and Thursday @ 1:30 PM.

Get into the holiday spirit at the Riegelsville Library!

Make and decorate a mini-gingerbread house or mini-tree!

Saturday, December 10, 11am – 1pm

All materials provided by the library.

Riegelsville Public Library, 615 Easton Road, Riegelsville, PA

Winter Wonderland

December 27th

Puppet shows will be held instead of story time on these dates. Shows will be held at 10:30am on Tuesday and 1:30pm on Thursday. No registration required, free to attend.

Eyes of the Wild and Wallaby Tales Traveling Zoo

Tuesday, December 29th at 11am

Riegelsville Borough Community Room

Join us for a free program to learn about Chinchillas, Artic Fox and more during this exciting and educational show featuring LIVE wildlife!

For more than a decade, Eyes of the Wild has operated as a wildlife rescue and educational facility. ***Live animals will be present. If you are allergic to animal fur or hair, please take appropriate precautions. Absolutely no food or drink may be present during the program.*

For info call: 610-749-2357 www.riegelsvillelibrary.com

HELPING HANDS FOR HIRE

Do you need a hand with something?

I enjoy the following:

Cleaning ("green"); sorting and organizing (even the messes!); Care-taking; land, home, people, animals; companionship; nourishing cooking/meal preparation; shopping; gardening and yard work (hand-based); personal assistant/helper; event preparation; and, I'm up for trying something not on this list too.

Available on an as-needed basis many weekdays 9:30-2:30. Sliding scale (pay what you can) or baseline hourly rate. Email bowersbetara@gmail.com Phone/Text: 908-674-2772 (Tara Bowers, mother of Alice, grade 3)

From KQED via Waldorf Today

Rethinking Intelligence: How does imagination measure up?

By Katrina Schwartz

Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman's personal education story may sound familiar to many families struggling against a system that doesn't tend to value qualities in students that make them different from a predetermined "average" learner. When he was young, Kaufman had central auditory processing disorder, which made it hard for him to process verbal information in real time. He was asked to repeat third grade because he was considered a "slow" learner. That started him down a path of special education classes until high school.

"I felt on the one hand that I was capable of more intellectual challenges," Kaufman told an audience at the Creativity Forum hosted by the Bay Area Discovery Museum, "but on the other hand I thought, 'Who am I to question authority?' " So he didn't, and since school wasn't challenging him, Kaufman spent a lot of time in his own internal world, daydreaming.

"In the school system no one sees your inner stream of consciousness, your imagination. They only see how slow you are," Kaufman said. That would have been true for Kaufman throughout school, except one perceptive teacher recognized his simmering frustration and was willing to look past his long history in special education classes. She gave him an untimed test, which ultimately showed he was likely capable of participating in general education classes.

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"One of the most powerful wellsprings of creative energy, outstanding accomplishment, and self-fulfillment seems to be falling in love with something — your dream, your image of the future." -E. Paul Torrance

"No one had ever tried to break out of special ed before at my high school," Kaufman said. Initially, school administrators clearly didn't think he could manage the speed of his new courses. Kaufman was allowed to try them on a provisional basis, which he said didn't inspire much confidence. But he was determined to prove them all wrong and was inspired by his new freedom. He wanted to experience everything school had to offer.

"I was curious for the first time in my life to see what I was capable of," Kaufman said. In his first semester outside special education classes, Kaufman went from a C-average to almost all A's. "I do love learning in general and I'm very curious. I was excited. I felt like a kid in a candy shop. I felt like, wow, for the first time I'm free."

Even though Kaufman proved himself capable of excelling in general education high school classes, when he applied to Carnegie Mellon University — writing that he wanted to study psychology so he could redefine intelligence — he was rejected because his SAT scores were too low. The irony of that rejection doesn't escape Kaufman but he was undaunted, applying to the college's opera program instead because it didn't require SATs.* He got in and slowly started taking classes in psychology, eventually changing majors.

Kaufman is now a professor of positive psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and the scientific director of its Imagination Institute. He got his master's from Cambridge and a doctorate from Yale, where he wrote his dissertation on a new theory of intelligence. Kaufman is clearly capable of deep scholarship when he's passionate about his work. But where would he be if that teacher hadn't recognized his frustration, or if he'd accepted Carnegie Mellon's initial rejection?

Redefining Intelligence

Kaufman's own experience and deep curiosity have led him to question the entire premise of the education system, which is based on IQ as the single measure of intelligence and cognitive ability. Kaufman thinks the traditional IQ test does a good job of measuring general cognitive ability, but says it misses all the ways that ability interacts with engagement. An individual's goals within the learning classroom and excitement about a topic affect how he or she pursues learning, none of which is captured on IQ tests. Worse, those tests are often used to filter people in or out of special programs.

Rather than using this singular definition of intelligence, Kaufman's work focuses on identifying characteristics of highly creative people. The Imagination Institute funds projects in a variety of disciplines that examine the role of imagination in different domains. Together these researchers are working to define an "imagination quotient," which takes into account all the ways imagination functions in people's work and maps what's going on in their brains.

Kaufman and others working in this area have slowly been mapping out what's called the default mode network, or what Kaufman likes to call the "imagination network." This brain network is largely ignored by cognitive scientists because it is off when a person is being asked to focus externally. When executive functioning is required, the imagination network is largely quiet.

But this network is extremely important for internal reflection and the process of meaning-making. It is associated with daydreaming, retrieving deeply personal memories and moderating emotional space. "The second you make a personal connection to anything, this network lights up," Kaufman said. "When you do the reading comprehension section of the SAT, this network is completely silent," he added.

Most of the time the brain toggles between the default mode network and the more outward-focused attention network. But neuroscientists like Rex Jung and colleagues are beginning to map out an understanding of creative cognition. They're finding that very creative people actually have stronger connections between the networks.

"People who scored really highly on our imaginative test show greater brain connectivity between these brain networks that are talked about a lot in the literature as being at odds," Kaufman said. He believes this is because imaginative, creative people are good at disconnecting the attention network in order to enter a flow state when they generate ideas, but can then key back into executive functioning in order to focus, sort and make sense of that generative time.

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"People who are really creative are really good activating and deactivating these neural networks," Kaufman said. They also tend to be open to experiences and score highly on divergent thinking tests. Since both attention and imagination networks are located in the brain, Kaufman believes it is a misnomer to call the qualities arising from the default mode network "non-cognitive."

"It's so important that we appreciate all of the cognitive functions coming from the imaginative brain network," he said.

Four practices to cultivate children's creativity

Despite the primacy of the attention network and executive functioning in education, Kaufman says there are several ways parents and educators can nurture creativity in young people and in adults.

1. Reflective time

Kaufman recommends allowing more solitary reflective time in kids' schedules. Whether it's the constant demands on attention at school or in after-school activities, there often isn't enough time in a child's day when she can switch off the executive functioning network and tap into the imagination network.

"I think executive function and self-control alone are nothing," Kaufman said. "It's just duty. Executive function for what?" He believes educators need to do more to couple executive function with imagination so learning comes alive with personal meaning. Then when the teacher demands attention, it is worthwhile to the learner.

2. Harmonious passion

"We support obsessive passion, but not harmonious passion," Kaufman said. He defines harmonious passion as a core part of people's identity that makes them feel good about themselves. Harmonious passion is characterized by flexible engagement, where a child can abandon the pursuit if it isn't paying dividends. And the passion often reflects qualities a person likes about himself and is easily integrated with the rest of his identity.

This type of passion is correlated with physical health, psychological well-being, work stamina (less burnout), concentration, self-esteem and work satisfaction, among other things. Harmonious passion differs from obsessive passion or motivation because it is a core part of a person.

"We need to be on the lookout for the twinkle in the eye and cultivate that harmonious passion," Kaufman said.

3. Diverse experiences

Kaufman also says it's important to give young kids a diverse set of experiences in order to increase the chances of inspiration. "Lots of things add meaning to our lives," he said.

4. Mindset reset

Lastly, Kaufman believes educators, parents, and policymakers need to reset their mindsets around student ability. "Kids who think differently are not appreciated in our school system at all," Kaufman said. "There is so much we could build on with kids who think differently." Rather than trying to shoehorn every child into one mold, Kaufman hopes educators from the top of the system down to individual classrooms will someday value the individual qualities that make each child uniquely gifted.

"The goal is to really stimulate this field," Kaufman said. "It's been dominated by the same tests for 50 years. It's time to look at things like inspiration and daydreaming or musical skills. We can be more imaginative in how we measure imagination."

Some have wondered if it's even worth measuring imagination, but Kaufman believes that measurement is important so researchers can see how changing behavior affects creative achievement. But he hopes the measurements are never used as another sorting mechanism.

"The key here is to assume there are a key set of skills that can be developed in everyone," he said.