

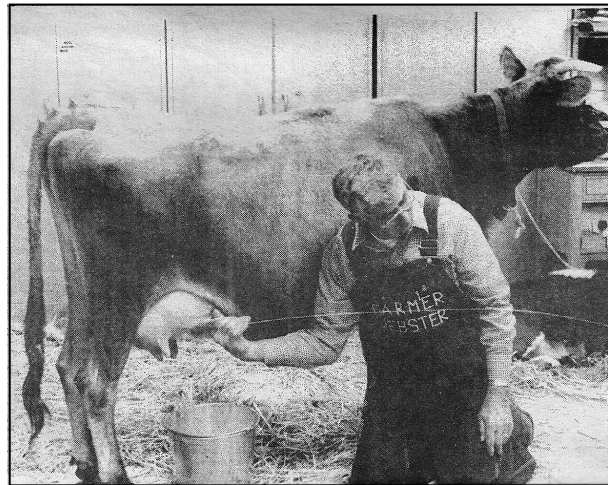
CONNECTIONS

www.uplandhills.org Winter 2009

With this issue, Connections continues to focus on the Upland Hills Community: the farm, the school, and the ecological center.

Our winter issue includes voices from the beginning of Upland Hills Farm School.

In times of change, community is the place we can rest in and draw support from. But community needs our support too, so that it may continue to grow and thrive.



The Farm Hatches, Evolves, and Lays its Own Chick

By Ken Webster

In the summer of 1960, the job of making what existed on 400 acres into a recreational farm began.

At the present time, the farm is a 240 acre parcel, based at the corner of Lake George and Indian Lake roads. However, the farm originally included the 160 acre parcel directly north of the present farm on Lake George Road between Indian Lake and Drahner roads. Here, my family lived in a large rambling house at 861 Lake George. This house and farm served as the first base for Upland Hills Farm (UHF).

The original 400 acre property included 4 houses, 3 barns, several large sheds, a corn crib, and 3 silos. In the thirties and forties, both farms were part of the Wind Row Farms belonging to a General Motors executive, C.E. Wilson.

Contents

The Chick	1
Origins	2
Calendar	3
The Mark	4
Growing Community	5
Karen Joy Theatre	6
Auction	7
CSA	16

continued on page 8

The Farm School or Origins and the Beginning of Things

by Phillip Moore

In a 6th grade classroom in Royal Oak, Michigan, I learned something that never left me. I was called up to the front of the classroom by my teacher Miss Larson. I knew by the tone of her voice that I had done something terribly wrong but I had no idea what it was. On that fateful day my strategy for surviving public school was blown up by a rail- thin ancient woman whom I thought lived in the teacher's closet. I was being 'outed' and it felt damned uncomfortable.

I rose in slow motion and moved hesitatingly to my fate.

"Are you sure you're finished with this map?" she asked.

"I think so," I offered in my softest voice.

"Well. You handed it in," she parried.

I slumped pathetically.

"Let me show you something," she said as she moved to the very closet where I thought she lived.

"Here. Look at this map."

And there was a map that looked like it had been drawn by G. Mercator. It was of Scandinavia in four colors, shaded to perfection around the fiords, with an ocean so blue that you expected a dolphin to jump out.

"Do you know who drew this map?"

"No," I said, playing a game I was sure to lose.

She gave me a look of disapproval, the lines on her face cooperating to intensify her disgust. She turned the map over slowly as if revealing her secret weapon. My brother's name, Melvin Moore, was written in impeccable printing.

"Now you take a new outline and begin again and this time DO IT RIGHT."

As I made my way back to my seat, with my fellow classmates glancing on, I thought, 'This is wrong,' and fell into a silence that stayed with me until the bell rang.

"Percentile is destiny in America." writes Walter Kirn, whose article 'Lost in the Meritocracy' appeared in Atlantic Monthly in
continued on page 11

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**Upland Hills School
Mission Statement**

Upland Hills School, founded in 1971, is an independent school community whose purpose is to educate pre-high school children. Our aim is to discover and respect the uniqueness of every child.

Guiding Principles

Upland Hills School holds the following principles as our core values and seeks to create an environment that:

- Protects, nurtures and defends the innocence of childhood
- Encourages a relationship between children and the natural world
- Empowers teachers and staff
- Fosters cooperation and consensus in decision-making
- Promotes mutual respect and trust that encourages our community to form authentic relationships
- Teaches us to think comprehensively
- Builds friendships that connect us with others around the world

Upland Hills School encourages children to know themselves and to connect with their environment as responsible world citizens. We provide a full academic program that emphasizes mastery of skills and creative growth. Our vision is that through the alignment and commitment of parents and teachers, children will come to see themselves as having extraordinary learning potential and access to the greatest miracle or tool in human experience, love.

Community Calendar

March

Bring in auction items, purchase tickets

April

Mon.-Tues., Apr. 6-14 Spring Recess - NO SCHOOL

Wed., Apr. 15 School Resumes

Sat., Apr. 25 Growing Community Auction

May

Fri., May 1 1 pm **karen Joytheatre - TPS "Alice"**

Sat., May, 2 2 and 7 pm **karen Joytheatre - TPS "Alice"**

Sat., May 16 7 pm **karen Joy theatre
UHS Community Showcase**

Mon. May 25 Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL

Tues.- Fri., May 26-29 Ted's Group Senior Trip

June

Mon.-Tues., June 1-2 Final Evaluations - NO SCHOOL

Wed. June 3 Renaissance Festival

Thurs. June 4 All-School Overnight

Fri. June 5 Last Day of School

The Mark of an Excellent Teacher

by Anissa Howard

The mark of an excellent teacher dwells in the tiniest hour of time. It lives not just within the teacher, and not just within the learner – it lives in what has been created by the existence of that particular relationship. This mark has the power to confuse and usurp the roles of ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’, nudging them into something more synergistic and more alive than a conventional thought system could invent. Whom then, is learning from whom? When it is inside an assured glance in the midst of hallway traffic, inside the steadiness of one person’s love being stronger than another one’s fear, inside the eyes of one that has felt the world pause for the sake of being attended to, inside the one who asks or has been asked, just the right question at just the right moment, inside the one who suddenly realizes and shares another definition of invisible, because now there’s visibility, and the contrast feels new and surprisingly good. The evidence of the depth of experience is everywhere at school.

Inside this excellence there is a compassionate wish to understand the world, a tender humility, and a sense of grace. I know these people. They are my mentors and teachers and I am the learner, the newest teacher, and yet sometimes it feels as if the roles temporarily dissolve. This is a unique place – the roles are allowed to dissolve because of who is defining them...a definition that embraces openness and the search for new growth. These people know things about growth that break them open to the new again and again. Such is the mark of an excellent teacher.

Nietzsche once imagined an eighty thousand year old man whose character was totally alterable, who contained an abundance of individuals and could call them up at will. When I read that, I thought of how this kind of responsiveness is exactly what is required right now, in order to live harmoniously -- Responsive Abundance. How simple. And how complex. Turning toward one another and creating exchanges that produce the willingness to act out of our best and most natural selves, seems the key to a more fulfilling way of living. It requires courage. It is how I choose to learn and how I choose to guide and teach. We do not need more stuff; we need only bring ourselves to one another and that is enough. That is perfect.

Last April, Phil’s heart spoke with a clarity that caused all of our attention to sharpen to a point. Not having him at school and knowing he was suffering were two things that felt like the absence of the kind of light that our school was founded on, and is sourced by now. We sang to him over phone lines, made cards and pictures so he knew what we were thinking, and visited him in sterile rooms, our feet tromping in parts of the hills of Upland that he couldn’t see from his hospital window. During that time, the staff took every opportunity to lift one another up, the children taught us about presence, and Phil showed us what vigilance and grace and gratitude look like when they are correctly embodied – despite the intensity and suffering - he showed us eighty thousand different kinds of love. Word from the surgeons and others in the operating room last April is that Phil’s heart is all kinds of beautiful colors.

I bowed inwardly to the gift of his return and celebrated as I watched him steer this school with an even deeper sense of purity. Many are the purposes at work in this return. Rumi wrote, “The waterhole is deep. A thirsty man climbs a walnut tree growing next to the pool and drops walnuts one by one into the beautiful place. He listens carefully to the sound as they hit and watches the bubbles. A more rational man gives advice, “You’ll regret doing this. You’re so far from the water that by the time you get down to gather walnuts, the water will have carried them away.” He replies, ‘I’m not here for walnuts, I want the music they make when they hit.”

My mentors are a continual source of joy to me. Being a full time teacher after David’s 22 years is full of challenges and rewards. I love the work of being with children, guiding and teaching them and seeing what unfolds. Teaching to each child’s gift is charting unknown territory and I often return to Holly’s and Jean’s

continued on page 15

Community Memories

by Bob Robins, UHS Class of 1975

"Consider how the community has grown..

My first experience with UHF was when I was around 5 or 6, in the late 1960's, when Dorothy Webster would bring animals to the little preschool across the street from Oakland University when my mother was attending OU.

I started attending Upland Hills Farm Day Camp when I was 6 or so and entered the UHS community at the age of 9, being a student during the first five years of the school, 1971-1975. I stay in contact with Phil and Karen, and a few of my fellow alumni, by phone, letter, and email and visit every time I am in the Detroit area, though I am not there very often anymore.

I have watched the UHS community grow from a small educational experiment "down on the farm" to the extended community it now represents. Back in the formative years, transportation was provided from within the city of Detroit, snaking through the northern suburbs, to Oxford. The community was there, spread out and not really connected, most parents just writing tuition checks, not participating, except for Knight and Dorothy Webster and the teachers, trying to make the idea of Upland Hills Farm School work.

I am not sure there was a community beyond that, at least not a community that was active or organized. It was Knight and Dorothy, the teachers and a few parents that took it upon themselves to begin the process of building the foundation of community. Was community-building a dream of theirs, or were they just trying to get a new school started, not really knowing where it would take them or how it would change their lives?

I have seen the UHS model change, in my view, from a learning environment for the children to an inclusive, fully integrated education-based community -- learning, sharing, supporting, welcoming, and loving all who want to be a part of it with the community itself being one of the most important elements of the school.

I remember, after the school moved off the farm, we would participate in helping a food co-op at a church in Lake Orion, every week, packaging food for members, and visiting the monastery, both helping to create the early contacts of local community surrounding the school. As my five years at the school advanced, we took trips to Washington DC, northern Michigan and participated more in the world surrounding the school. I do remember pulling out giant boulders from a field to be used as the foundation for something called the Eco Center one of the cornerstones in enlarging the community beyond the dome and portable buildings.

"...As well as your place in it"

I am an alumnus, I designed the lighting system at the Karen Joy Theatre, I give very small contributions when I can, and I stay in touch....

I would like to offer the question, "...as well as it's place in you."

The UHS community now stretches for thousands of miles, through hundreds, if not thousands of alumni, past teachers, parents and supporters. I know the place it resides in me and my family. It is a place of

continued on page 15

Growing Community

From the beginning, Upland Hills School has appealed to families seeking a deeper connection with one another and their world. . The stories of these connections and journeys to and from UHS will be featured here in **Growing Community**.

In the last issue, we asked readers to consider how the Upland community has grown. We received this response from an alumnus



Community...Connect.... Creating Abundance in a Learning Community

by Jane Kline, Managing Director, Karen Joy Theatre

During these challenging economic times, day to day concerns can easily overshadow the need to nourish our spirits. There is a special place in the woods...a beacon for joy and hope. When we gather in *community* to enjoy an evening of music or to be mesmerized by children taking us to faraway places through the enchantment of theatre, it nourishes our spirit. Karen Joy Theatre *connects* us with people, ideas, information, experiences and ourselves. Our venue *creates* opportunities for children and adults to meet, grow,

learn and hold on to lasting memories.

After the spellbinding performances of Grammy-winning musicians Eugene Friesen and Glen Velez in September, an enthusiastic guest said, "What a fantastic concert! Two world renowned artists playing nonstop for two hours, six feet in front of us...best concert I've attended. I'm proud to support Karen Joy Theatre!" He understood the value of the experience and wanted to give back. On a snowy night in December, "green" musician Billy Jonas played to a nearly packed house. And, of course, our student production of "The Arabian Nights" was a delightful success.

Over the past three years, we have worked hard to create a greater awareness of this unique venue beyond our current school families and alumni. We are now beginning to see the results of these efforts by way of increased theatre rentals, sponsorships, donations and advertising. But, our work is ongoing and essential to ensure the sustainability of this special space. Just as a cast of characters supports each other on stage, you play a vital role by continuing to bring family and friends to Karen Joy Theatre events. These are just a few of the benefits KJT provides for students: opportunities to perform in a theatre; classroom space for theatre, music and math; enhances enrollment possibilities for the school.

Take a look at the multifaceted uses for KJT and please keep them in mind as you spread the word:

- Performing arts; theatre, concerts, world renowned and local musicians, poetry/storytelling
- Recitals; vocal and instrumental
- Seminars/workshops/guest speakers
- Films
- Special events; dedication ceremonies, fundraisers, graduations, weddings, memorial services
- Summer Theatre Camps
- Artist Gallery

It is my goal to ensure a fiscally secure future for Karen Joy Theatre. I am inviting you to join me in this vision for KJT: reaching out to a broader *community*...*connecting* with new patrons ...*creating* a sustainable future so the theatre can continue to offer an abundance of opportunities for generations to come.

UPCOMING KJT EVENTS

UHS TPS presents "Alice" May 1, 1 pm; May 2, 2 & 7pm
UHS Community Showcase NEW DATE Sat. May 16th 7pm

www.karenjoytheatre.org 248-693-2878

“GROWING COMMUNITY” AUCTION 2008

For nearly forty years, community has made Upland Hills a loving and rich learning environment, nourishing students, teachers and families as well as our extended group of friends and alumni. Please join us in celebrating all that is Upland Hills School... creativity, cooperation, and friendship.



A Deeper Shade of Green - In recognition of our continued support for sustainable solutions, we are working toward a deeper shade of green for this auction. We have moved our program book and sponsor recognition online to our website. We are also looking for “green” items for our auction - handmade or “new to you” items such as jewelry, pottery, antiques or artwork as well as experiential donations such as dinner, entertainment tickets, cottage visits or fishing expeditions.

Become a Sponsor - Provide essential underwriting for the evening. Includes ten (10) reserved seats at a special table for you and your guests with personal signage/logo display, and website recognition.

Buy a Patron Table - Host a table for 10 at the Auction. Share it with friends and family for a memorable evening, or donate it back to the school and we will fill it for you! Includes ten (10) reserved seats at a special table with personal signage/logo display.

Donate quality items for Silent and Live Auctions. The value of Silent items starts at about \$50, while Live items begin at \$500. Start now to request donations from businesses that you patronize. Whether you live near or far, we’d love to receive an auction item from you! Check our website for a current list of sponsors and contributed items.

Don’t forget our 50/50 and quilt tickets! If every family sells 30 total tickets, we could earn \$10,000! They are an easy way to have friends and family members contribute to the auction. Every family selling 30 total tickets receives one free ticket for auction night. Auction information is available on the website or in the office or contact Staci Brodeur, Auction Chairperson, at staci320@comcast.net.

Sponsorships and Patron Tables

_____	Platinum	\$5000	_____	Silver	\$1000
_____	Gold	\$3000	_____	Patron	\$ 500

Business/Organization _____
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Return this form with payment to: Upland Hills School, 2575 Indian Lake Rd., Oxford, MI 48370 248-693-2878

UPLAND HILLS SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

The Chick.....continued from page 8

He raised prize Ayrshire cattle on the Lake George farms. In the fifties, the 240 acre parcel was used as dairy farm. Overall, the property was mostly open, recently farmed fields with 80 acres of woods along the southwest corner.

The house at 861 Lake George included several studio/apartment spaces and many bedrooms. This house was used for families to visit and stay at the farm. There was a double barn at this address that was turned into a riding stable and the farm rented horses to ride for several years. This address also had a duplex house which served as a dorm for 28 coeds from Oakland University in 1961. A hayride business was set at the 481 Lake George farm. Horse stalls for draft horses were built in the downstairs of the present day large barn at the farm. Parties were held in the 80 year old farm house (now called the clubhouse) on the corner of Lake George and Indian Lake roads and in the upstairs of the still existing big barn.



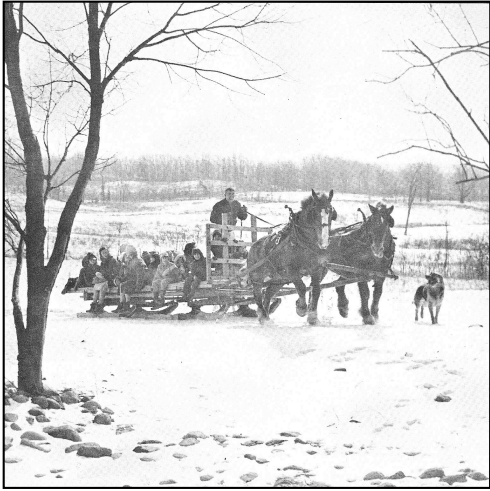
At first the business was a simple partnership. When it looked like the farm business was getting off to a slow start, the main investor, Henry Moses, decided to withdraw from the business arrangement. As the plan was restructured, Moses would own the northern 160 acres, at 861 and 841 Lake George and UHF would exist only at the 481 address, its present-day position.

In April of 1962, the farm became a corporation. With the withdrawal of Moses, my parents needed cash to finance capital improvements and move the business forward. There were originally about 16 stockholders, besides my parents. These stockholders were family, friends, or parents of children that had attended my mother's kindergarten classes at Roeper City and Country School. They invested between 500 and 3000 dollars each. Some were people who valued education and could understand my parents' vision of a working educational recreational farm. Others were Roeper contacts who saw a possible income-producing investment.

My parents had many ideas on how their recreational farm might support itself. These included a summer day camp, family camping, a horseback riding stable, and a hay/sleigh ride party business. Within a few years, the family camping concept had not proven popular. Hayrides and day camp had become the backbone of the farm economy. Horseback riding was popular but proved a difficult and expensive business, due to accompanying insurance costs. Sunday farm visits and elementary school tours would soon become new popular parts of the business. Later, the traveling farm which visited schools also became popular.

Through the early 1960's, the farm survived as business expanded. My mother supported our family by continuing to teach at Roeper City and Country School. My brothers and I continued as Roeper students as well. In 1962, I started Lake Orion High School. In 1963 Steve began seventh grade and in 1964 Bruce attended sixth grade in Lake Orion. Leslie Rigg (later to become Leslie Webster) first came to day camp as an eleven year old camper in 1963. The 1962-3 school year was my mother's last year teaching at Roeper.

With the change to a corporation in 1962, the farm changed. The upper 160 acres were no longer part of the farm. The family moved to the house at 481 Lake George. In some ways the reorganization was good for



the farm as a business. Day camp and hayrides were held on the lower farm. The horseback riding business could move to the big barn on the south property. The family camping business had not been very successful for several reasons. It was focused around our house on the upper farm. It hadn't made much money, but more importantly, it was based in our home.

As the stress of making the business work increased, the act of constantly entertaining guests became a burden. My mother was teaching school, mothering three sons ages 9-14, cleaning a house, cooking and cleaning for visitors, financially managing the business, doing chores, organizing my father, answering the business telephone which rang in our house, and probably a dozen other things long forgotten. If I make it sound like my mother did all the work, that's not true. My father worked dawn to dusk and into the evening with every hayride party, every bonfire, and more.

My parents were hard workers. My father seemed to never tire. But it became clear that our house had to provide some small measure of separation from the business concerns -- a haven from customers; a place to totally relax.

So the family moved to the house on the lower farm. The houses and barns of the upper farm had provided living space for employees and storage for hay and farm equipment. These buildings were not important to any part of the business except family camping and overnight visitors.

Our house became a more private place away from visitors, although the office remained in it. The phone ruled and always had to be answered in a business-like manner. It was our lifeline to maintaining and expanding the business. I know to this day, all Websters have a certain aversion to the power a telephone has to make you answer it. It was essential, but hated.

By the summer of 1963, Upland Hills Farm had developed a clear and defined identity. It was a business that could support the family, growing and improving each year. It was a day camp with over 100 children coming from all over the metropolitan area. Each summer, day campers would first do chores, then farm and camp activities and usually go swimming in the afternoon. UHF was also a hay/sleigh ride party business. Every Friday night through Sunday, groups would ride horse drawn wagons and sleighs. After the rides, guests would square dance in the barn loft or sit around a campfire enjoying the evening. The farm was also a horseback riding stable, renting about a dozen horses to be ridden whenever customers arrived wanting to ride. It was a working farm with a herd of sheep, a half dozen milk cows, sows and piglets, goats with a towering goat walk, poultry yard, teams of draft horses along with the riding horses, rabbits, a burro, peacocks, and many other small animals. My father raised small amounts of corn and grain that he harvested so that visitors could see how a farm might have worked 50 years ago. Oats, corn, wheat, sorghum, broom corn, milk, sheep's wool, and many other farm products were raised and made into useful products so that visitors could see and understand the farming process.

My parents became Farmer and Mrs. Webster. Over the years, several hundred thousand people were squirted with cow's milk by Farmer Webster, watched my mother spin wool with an apple spinner, watched my father shear a sheep or pick up a squealing piglet, or saw Mrs. Farmer Webster show them the difference between a duck and a drake.

UPLAND HILLS SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

It was a dawn to dusk, seven day a week operation. And it was growing. It was attracting visitors from around the country and the world. These visitors had heard of this unique, working educational farm. They came from Ohio, New York, Europe, Australia, all over the world. The farm was visited by many people over the years who wanted to start a similar type of business or were just curious that such a unique business existed. Because of this interest, my parents began a franchise business. A farm called Sugarbush Farm was started on Ford Road between Plymouth and Ann Arbor. Later, Upland Hills Farm set up and operated the living farm at Mayberry State Park near Northville.

Teaching friends of my parents wanted to bring their classes to the farm for visits. My parents welcomed them. Beginning in 1963, school visits became one of the farm's main businesses. In 1967, the traveling farm began to visit schools throughout the area from Flint to Detroit. By this time, horseback riding had ceased as a farm business. Early on, the farm was open for visitors every Saturday and Sunday. Later this was reduced to Sunday-only visiting.

In the mid-1960's, a new barn was built on an old barn foundation. The new barn became the center of much of the farm business. Now each hayride party could have a spaghetti dinner as well as hayride and square dance. The barn had a large dinner room as well as party rooms with dance floors and double-decker toilets built into old silos. The farm could and did handle 4 parties at one time. The office was moved to the new barn. A secretary was hired to answer the phone. Business was expanding.

Two events in the 1960's occurred that would profoundly affect the future of Upland Hills School. In January of 1964 my sister Pamela was born. I would turn 16, Steve 13, and Bruce 11 that year. Second, as the farm business grew my parents felt it might be possible to hire someone to help run the business and relieve my parents of some business responsibilities.

In 1969, they hired Chuck and Marcia Loznak as farm managers. Chuck and Marcia were a multi-talented couple with many interests, three boys under the age of ten, and many friends and connections to Wayne State University.

Hiring Chuck and Marcia meant my parents had more free time to think about new projects for the farm. The Loznaks were thinkers and dreamers themselves. And of course, between the Loznaks and the Websters there were 4 elementary school-aged children. After much discussion, the concept of Upland Hills Farm School evolved. Mother was encouraged by friends from her teaching days at Roeper. Chuck and Marcia had friends in the education department at Wayne State, including Tom Hamill. Mr. Hamill hired staff and became director for the Upland Hills Farm School. In September of 1971, Pam Webster, Robin, Nico and Josef Loznak, and about 30 other students began Farm School in the big party barn down on the farm. Classes were held in one of the party room spaces. The organization of the school was left up to the director, Tom Hamill, and the teachers he had hired.

At this point, the farm had over ten years of visitors, farm education and day camp, hay and sleigh rides, more than 100,000 visitors per year who generated interest in it from around the world, and now a school in one of its barns. What was next? What else could my father dream up? What else would my mother find possible and practical to do? And what kind of school is held in a barn and has a farm as its classroom?

next issue: part three - The Ever Expanding Learning Community

Origins.....continued from page 3

2005. As a Rhodes Scholar, Walter comes to his indictment of traditional education from a completely different perspective. Yet it's astounding how similar it is to mine -- the average student who couldn't take a test to save his life.

I'm a slow learner. I'm also an auditory learner. The game of school as it was played from 1953 until 1966 was all about tests. It was a game that was stacked against me. I woke up on that great day of humiliation and started to observe teachers and students. Fate gave me the perfect opportunity to learn from many teachers during my 7th and 8th grade years. I was a part of a demographic blip in the population known as the Baby Boomers. The Royal Oak School District was unprepared to support this large influx of students and we were treated to half days for the first part of our seventh grade and later transferred to a different junior high school, midway through 7th grade. We no longer had one primary teacher but shifted to a roster of teachers dedicated to specific subjects.



I began a practice during the rest of my education that continues to inform me to this day. It's a simple practice. I imagine myself to be the size of a dragonfly and I perch myself in the far corner of the classroom. I take note of every open window and door, vent or heating duct, and I pay attention to the teacher as if reporting for an alien species far superior to our own. The questions that my employers are curious about are : Do these people love children? Do they love their work? Are they creative? Do they harm or help?

I came to Upland Hills Farm School after it had been created. A school like ours -- an independent progressive experiment in how to teach children -- was a unique creation, just as every child or every new experiment is. I have listened to stories from many people about the beginnings of Upland Hills Farm School and I have imagined, through reason and intuition and imagination, whole pictures of what came before. But to be fair, I don't know. I wasn't there. It's as if my life's work was about creating one of the most fabulous restaurants in the world. And yet, the location was chosen, the patrons were found, the first chefs were hired, and meals were being served, before my arrival.

I often begin my telling of the story of Upland Hills School in Malaga, Spain during January of 1971. But it could just as well begin in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan over the course of three summers. More subtly, it could have its origins during my first reading of A.S. Neil's book, Summerhill, which told of a radical approach to childrearing and education. Or I could fix everything that has unfolded to the day I fell in love with a mother and a child. All of these beginnings hold some kernel of truth, yet every one of them is not true at the same time.

There are loving ancestors whom I barely knew who inspired my desire to work with children. There are my own dead parents who continue to love me beyond time and space. There are other people, in other places led by their dreams and determination to raise children with love that found their way to this plot of land in Oakland County yet everyone of them is a part of the bigger picture. . In that way, the school and its story is a dream that transcends the dreamers.

My story of walking into a Kresge store in Malaga, Spain and walking toward the lunch counter thinking that the person I'm standing behind is Ken Webster or some Spaniard that looks like Ken, is in dispute because Ken doesn't remember that at all. We did meet in Spain. We had no idea that either one was there. We spent a few days together finding someone to crate his Bultaco motorcycle and ship it to Oxford, and during that time he told me that his parents were starting a school. Karen, Nina, and I traveled for another 6 months after that, but the encounter planted a seed which grew into a visit to Upland Hills Farm School in October of 1971.

What Karen and I found when we first entered Upland Hills Farm School was a converted barn, dedicated teachers, children and lots of chaos and creativity. We were attracted to the people and to the potential of creating a new model of what education could be. I was hired as a teacher in November of that year. Two other former Pioneer Camp counselors were also hired, along with Jeff and Robin Davis. By December, we were without a director and I was asked to take the position in February of that first year. By the end of that year, we had pulled together like the pioneers that Pioneer Camp was named after. We had been tested in real time, by real situations some of which felt like life and death.

The building of the dome and the teepee that year, were symbols and endeavors that brought us together and gave us hope. In the early seventies, our culture was divided. There were people who believed in the conventional system and there were people who were convinced that something new was required. Our generation was and still is engaged in the conflict between the ironic mind and the literal mind, the experimental and the dogmatic, the tolerant and the fanatical. With our new staff, which was a hybrid of the original staff along with new teachers like me, we choose to work on these two projects that would come to symbolize the synthesis of the new curriculum. The teepee represented native wisdom. The dome introduced the concept of designing with nature via a new geometry called synergetics.

Two of the original staff members, Bruce and Ann Tubbs, ordered the teepee kit. We needed to find trees, strip them of their bark, sew the canvas, and clear a spot of ground to install it. In early spring, we began the work and invited all ages to participate. Beyond the teepee was the dome. I had been inspired by the work of R. Buckminster Fuller and knew that my brother had made a three frequency geodesic dome frame in Ann Arbor that he needed to get rid of. Finally, in addition to these projects, was the fact that we had to spend most of the spring outdoors because school tours of Upland Hills Farm (hundreds of school children every day in the barn) began in earnest in late February, 1972.

I am convinced that all building projects begin with great enthusiasm as well as hidden land mines. Bonnie (a six year old) and Annie (a founding teacher) worked tirelessly on bark stripping for the teepee. Draw knives and hours of patience and determination were required for this job. Many of our students were going through a phase I call 'deschooling' so making a commitment was not in their vocabulary yet. They sat on the sidelines and made comments and suggestions or drifted into activities that required less dedication.

In order to get the dome, we needed to drive to Ann Arbor and take it apart. We drove the stake truck to Ann Arbor and disassembled the 24 foot diameter homemade geodesic dome. We started out being very careful and ended up using sledge hammers and crow bars. Our resident skeptic, Peter, would lend a hand now and then, but would often shake his head and say, "You've destroyed too many struts, this will never work." As fate would have it, Peter was quite powerful in an understated way and had many friends who understood and agreed with his view.

Kennon (age 11) and Brent worked hard when we got back to the farm. We took over a section of Knight Webster's jumbled, "jack of all trades" workshop and began the work of restoration. Following color codes and angles we worked from February until late May. We made models. We learned how to use circular saws and table saws. We restored hardware and dove into the world of complex angles. Peter would show up to lend a

hand and offer tidbits like "When wood begins to rot, it can never be stopped," and then disappear. Meanwhile, Annie, Bonnie, and our oldest student Jan, slowly but surely finished every pole and were ready to assemble the teepee.

On a beautiful spring day, we hitched a flatbed trailer to a tractor and drove the unassembled parts of the dome to a field near where Ken's house is today. (This same site has been selected for our newest experiment: Community Supported Agriculture.) The entire school unloaded the dome. Our optimism and hope was palpable. It was a beautiful day that turned into a frustrating afternoon, when we discovered that we needed to make several new triangles and had no idea how to build a dome. Should we start at the top and work our way to the row that would rest on the earth or go the other way? No one knew. Peter said it wouldn't make any difference, both would result in failure.

In the early evening with all the children gone and a few teachers left, we tried to figure out how to install the top pentagon. Knight came by and before too long had returned with a tractor and a huge sledge hammer. Using his front end loader, we were able to convince ourselves that with the entire school lifting from the bottom we could close the gap at the top. Everyone went home. That night, I dreamed of holes in the sky.

On a Friday at the end of May, the entire school came out to the field. Every child from little Bonnie and Nina to Jan (who was 15) took a position at the base of the dome and lifted. A few of us were on the tractor trying with all our might to close the gap to allow an 8 inch bolt to be inserted. I glanced down to see Peter lifting with all his might at a crucial weak junction. I caught his eye and he shot me a look. Just as we were all ready to surrender, it came together. We inserted the bolts and the entire structure became strong and beautiful in an instant. A cheer went up from the crowd.

Kennan started climbing to the top. I looked on saying, "Be careful." But the dome was strong -- stronger than we knew. Kennan got to the top and thrust both hands in the air. A cheer went up once more and Peter shouted, "We did it!" That year, there were two all-school pictures. One showed every student and teacher on or near the dome and the other with us all in front of the teepee.

The next summer we moved from the farm to where we are today. Jack, hired as a new teacher, inspired us all with his enthusiasm, hard work and keen sense of humor. We worked that entire summer as novice contractors, surveyors, ditch diggers, masons, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians. Several trusting and courageous families had personally signed for a loan and we purchased two mobile classrooms and tried to finish the dome (which we didn't).

Jackie Potter, John Yaruvian, Jack Kobliska, Karen Moore, Marcia Rose, and Steve Bhaerman became the first staff of our new location on Indian Lake Road. The connection between us was not restricted to our interest in education or teaching, although both of those topics held some varying degree of importance. The thing that mattered most to each of us was friendship. John and Karen and I had worked at Pioneer Camp together with Ken and we shared a deep love for the theatre. Jack had lived communally with Jackie in Washington D.C. in a house called Atlantis. Steve was Jackie's lover who had started an alternative high school in the D.C. area and written a book about that experience. Marcia and Karen knew each other from Wayne State University. Marcia was also a founder of the school and a kindred spirit in many ways. Friendship became an integral part of our curriculum. It was so organic and simple, it took years for me to realize that working with our friends was a foundational building block upon which the rest of our curriculum would rest.

In December, 2008, while on my way to see my four grandchildren in Los Angeles, I arranged to spend two days in Boulder, Colorado. I asked a former student, Brett Piazza, if he would pick me up at the airport. Within the span of an hour or so, we were sitting in a vegetarian restaurant waiting for Brett's brother Shaun to join us.



Shaun was taking a final exam in physics at the University of Colorado. As we waited, I thought about investments. The news of that week was all focused on 'the economic melt down'. The worst stock market ever, the mortgage crisis, unemployment, the Big Three on the brink of bankruptcy, and a man by the name of Madoff who made off with 50 billion dollars of his investors' money. Investments. Brett and Shaun were investments for me and their teachers. We invested our time, efforts, and concern in their education. We wanted them to find their gifts and to grow into adults who cared deeply about nature and people. This lunch was a dividend.

Shaun arrived a little perturbed and ruffled. The way I remember him is an image of him on a men's class overnight: his smile and the careful way he prepared to make it through a cold winter night. The Shaun I knew was an easy-going, unflappable, good natured funny kid. This guy who had just shown up for lunch was upset and glad his final exam was over.

After we ordered, Shaun leaned forward and offered this: "When I finish my degree in physics and education this year, I want to return to Upland for a year. Then I want to write a book on education. Ever since I left Upland, school has stunk. It doesn't have to. I know it doesn't have to. So I've talked about it a lot in my education classes and everyone thinks I'm crazy. It's simple, really. School needs to be like summer camp. It can be fun. It can be an adventure. It can be outdoors. It can teach us that learning is a kind of joy that can last a lifetime."

Change. The only thing we can count on. The only thing we can be certain of. I've written eight distinct definitions of change down on the inside of my notebook for this school year. After all, this is the year we elected a president who based his entire campaign on 'Change.' But what exactly do we mean when we use that word? Is it the kind of change where we reshuffle the deck, or the kind where we hunker down? Or is it a change of such magnitude that it has epic repercussions?

I would love to imagine a school system that was deeply embedded in the natural world. I would love to imagine a school system where every line of intelligence was honored. I would love to see a school where interpersonal and emotional intelligence was more important than science. I would love to be a part of creating a system of schools that connected deeply to people in all countries of all races and religions and where we supported each other in order to create a world where understanding and compassion replace absolutist thinking and ethnocentric world views. I imagine a school system that prizes supports and encourages creativity in all areas of human endeavor. I can imagine a school based on love. One where the goal of every day is to transact love via attention, appreciation and affection. I can imagine a school that celebrates the unique qualities of every human being.

And just like Shaun, I can imagine a school that was so filled with joy and the excitement of learning that after a weekend or a short vacation or the summer break, you couldn't wait to come back.

Memories...*continued from page 5*

foundation, of base level values. When I visit the school, it is very different -- the look, the vibe, but not the soul -- the deep-down feeling of love, strength, and family. I can feel it -- a sense of purpose and vision, of being settled. From the main building to the dome, there is a sense of ownership, not in me but in the energy of the school itself. In me, there is a feeling of being comfortable and welcome.

I read Connections and marvel at the strong and large community that is UHS. No more bus snaking its way through the city and countryside. Families that are living closer, it seems. They are sharing in life outside of the school's walls, making daily decisions that affect the community, not just "when is the van going to get here" and "how many calendars do I have to buy this year?" It is a vibrant, working, and supportive community and family that has grown from that little experiment down on the farm. It is no longer a school just for the attending students, but a community that stretches beyond its walls.

As a public school teacher in Florida, I see now in full circle how important and vital the idea of community is: in school, in learning, and, of course, in life and how it needs to be interwoven as the fabric of a successful school.

As I write this, my iTunes has decided to play a CD by Josh White, Jr., a songwriter/singer that has performed at the Karen Joy Theatre. The CD was given to me from Phil during one of my visits. The soul of a community is always there, and I know that the UHS community is always in me.

The Mark...*continued from page 4*

connected rooms in hopes of an answer I am seeking, or encouragement by way of companionship in perspective, and to remember the years spent in those rooms working so closely with them. It is easy to see the children's gifts and at times, hard to help them attune to it. My mentors who are now also my colleagues are there...wise and warm and intelligent. The children are happy and playful in each of our rooms.

I feel that as I teach, I am in my own kind of invented school -- an original, unrepeatable kind of school. The curriculum is a wild curriculum, appropriate for the one who chooses to take it. Each child is a gift to this curriculum, and to our school. It is my hope that I am able enough to someday teach and guide with the manner of depth and intelligence and sincerity with which I am being taught and guided, mentored by the ones here who know this territory so well. This is a small school, a strong school...very like a heart with all kinds of beautiful colors.

Calling all Writers --

The next issue of Connections will focus on "A Learning Community: Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center." Please submit your articles or photos by March 21, 2009 to Karen Troshynski-Thomas at school or by email at tthomas5975@wowway.com.

Know Your Grower!

Know your grower and make Upland Hills YOUR farm!

Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center, Upland Hills Farm, and Upland Hills School are working together to create the Upland Hills CSA program.

A CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and its community members which makes a direct connection between producing and consuming food. CSA supporters or members purchase a share in the farm. These shares cover a farm's yearly budget, providing the farmer with startup funds to purchase seeds, fertilizer, water, labor, and other necessities. In exchange, the farm provides members with weekly shares of fresh, seasonal produce during the growing season (usually June through October).*

The concept originally began in Japan where a group of women concerned about an increase in food imports and a decrease in native farming developed a direct growing and purchasing relationship between themselves and farmers. "Teikei" means "putting the farmers' face on food." The concept moved to Europe and then Massachusetts in the mid-1980s. LocalHarvest estimated the number of CSAs in the US in 1990 at 50. They currently number over 2200.

There are many benefits to a CSA: the farmer has a guaranteed market for produce, which reduces waste and marketing dollars as well as any "middlemen"; the consumer receives high-quality, fresh, seasonal local produce at a fair price; supports the development of small farms and a wider selection of crops which supports diversity and responsible stewardship of the land; connection between farmers and consumers, city-dwellers with rural areas, and people and land are established.

With Les Roggenbuck of East River Organic Farm as the lead farmer, the blessing of Steve and Leslie Webster of Upland Hills Farm, and the assistance of many from the Upland Hills Community, the Upland Hills CSA is in the planning stages of its mission to bring local food to the community.

The group held an informational meeting at the Karen Joy Theatre in mid-February. For more information, please visit their website at www.uplandhillscsa.blogspot.com or via email at uplandhillscsa@gmail.com.

*According to LocalHarvest and CSA of North America at University of Massachusetts Extension



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