



Beyond the Ordinary

Established 1998

April 2, 2009

Pre-K Apps. Being Accepted!

Do you have a Pre-K student and would like to come to The Mountain School next year? We are now accepting applications for our full-day program! In-coming students must be **four (4) years of age by October 31**. If you are interested, or know of someone interested, please see the office for an application or more information.

OPUS Thanks

A big “thank you” to our students, parents, Board members, donors and staff for another wonderful OPUS presentation. If you have any pictures, we’d love it if you could stop by to pick up a CD and bring us some copies. Thank you!

7/8 Hiring Process

The interview committee will make an announcement by April 10 as to our next teacher for the 7/8 classroom. We have had wonderful applicants, and appreciate everyone’s patience. We look forward to the announcement!

JISP News

Thank you to all our volunteers who help with JISP this year. Special thanks to Greg Hasaj and Betsy Wadsworth for coordinating and keeping things going all season long. There is still a free JISP day at Stratton on Sunday, April 5th.

Report Cards Out Today

Please be sure to check your child’s backpack for Report Cards today. Thanks!

Upcoming Events

4/8	PAB 8:45 am
4/10	1/2 Day 11:55 Dismissal
4/13-4/17	Spring Break
4/30	Community Potluck & Taylor Farm Fundraiser

New Development Director

We are pleased to announce that we have found our Development Director! Hersey Egginton, II is a graduate of Middlebury College (BA in Literature), Syracuse University (MA in Journalism), and Columbia University (MBA in Marketing & Finance and MA in Higher Education Administration). He has spent 20 years in development at Trinity College, Baruch College, The Culinary Institute of America, Columbia University and Purchase College (currently). He has also worked in other public relations and marketing fields. Hersey will be joining The Mountain School family July 1, 2010. Be sure to welcome him into the fold!

Head of School/Spouses

Conference

Each fall and spring, the Independent School Association of Northern New England (ISANNE) hosts a professional development conference for all Heads of School and their spouses. Next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, Mr. And Mrs. Houck will both be in Portland, ME for this valuable conference focusing on Financial Stability. Ms. Spence will be the acting Head of School while Mr. Houck is out of the building.

Daren M. Houck, Headmaster
Carol A. Stachelek, Office Manager

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

A Word from the Headmaster

When You're a Pioneer

By Daren M. Houck, M.Ed.

One thing that The Mountain School has tried to do is change the way that education is done. We recognize that the components of “being successful” have changed dramatically over the past quarter century; the global economy, the advent of the internet and Google©, etc. In fact, things now change so quickly that **50% of technical skills learned by college freshman are outdated by their junior year**. However, some recipes for success have remained and will remain constant—the ability to solve problems, working with others, being flexible, having creativity and more. These are the tenets that drive our decisions and curriculum as a school. The more research I study, books I read, and visitors I tour with, the more I realize that *we are cutting edge*...true pioneers in education.

Being a pioneer can be unsettling—it takes risk. I mean risks can lead you to ruin, right? (Look at your “aggressive” stock portfolio!). Inversely, risk can lead to great rewards...the venture capitalist that said “yes” to a gawky teenager named Bill Gates, the young (and poor) Cornelius Vanderbilt that took his small savings and a chance to start a railroad and shipping company, and more. Many people, though, prefer to let others take the risk and wait until it is proven “foolproof” before partaking themselves. I have always believed that passion and risk are close relatives—and you must have both to find true love, happiness, and success.

Please understand we are not taking risks with your children. We have research-

driven data to support our reasons for our educational philosophy and practice. However, The Mountain School probably is different from the school we went to as children, and that—in and of itself—can be unsettling. We are fortunate to have the research and support to show that we are, while different, cutting edge and effective in our program.

Tony Wagner, an education professor at Harvard and founder of a school change center has an interesting new book out entitled, *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach The New Survival Skills Our Children Need—and What We Can Do About It*. Basically, the book narrows these skills down to “Seven Survival Skills for Careers, College, & Citizenship in the 21st Century.” These skills include:

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence
3. Agility and Adaptability
4. Initiative and Entrepreneurship
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Accessing and Analyzing Information
7. Curiosity and Imagination

These seven skills align perfectly with our philosophy as a school, and will hopefully give you an insight into why we—and others—are preparing students for the future in a non-traditional way...because the future is non-traditional. Notice that none of these skills are content-based. The memorization of facts (i.e. this worthless piece of information I memorized 20 years ago: 1066 A.D., The Battle of

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

Hastings and the Norman Conquest, which is the reason why we speak English) is no longer necessary for success. Rather, *the ability to access, summarize, and synthesize that information is key*—i.e. internet searches (search “Norman Conquest” and see the thousands of links) to find and funnel information to find a solution.

At The Mountain School, our goal is to teach children to think, not just memorize. There are lower-order thinking skills (ability to define or recall an object or information) and higher-order thinking skills (the ability to defend a point or validate a hypothesis). We want students to be higher-order thinkers...to be able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. That is why we sit in groups, not rows; that is why we do interactive multi-media presentations for a book response, not book reports; and that is why we write and create our own plays and performances, not memorize another person’s work of art and act it out on stage.

I realize that things are never simple, but I categorize people into two categories: problem-solvers and problem-causers. Problem-solvers are initiators and creators; they are proactive and think critically, helping humanity. Problem-causers are divided up into two subgroups. Group one is the traditional problem-causer—they disrespect people and protocol, cause an unsafe environment, etc. But people that cannot be proactive or think on their own—in short, those who must always be told what to do—also create problems, albeit different ones. They use up time and resources from other problem-solving, creative initiators and take away those resources from those who may not have

the capacity solve their own problems (i.e. individuals with disabilities, etc.). Notice, too, that traditional task-oriented jobs that require no creativity are slowly being razed—mail sorting is now automated, for example.

My goal is that every one of our children leaves The Mountain School not with just a memorization of dates or facts, but rather with a better understanding of how to take a set of problem-solving skills and apply it to any set of circumstances, how to access important information and relate to the situation at hand, and how to create new ways to solve current crises—be it in the fields of science, energy, finances or education. May The Mountain School continue to be cutting edge, and may we help produce new pioneers for the next frontier: the future.

Mrs. Burnett and Paul off to China!

Our PK/K teacher Linda Burnett and Art/Integration Specialist Paul Molinelli will be leaving Vermont April 8 and returning April 24. Be sure to wish them well before they leave!

Pre-K/K News

Thank you all for coming to our Opus performance. We had lots of fun learning and practicing for our show. Our celebration continued on Friday with visits to other classrooms for reciprocal sharing of our work. I will be leaving for China on Tuesday evening. Chris Uchida and Beata will be here as usual and Chris Mix is coming in to assist. Our class has discussed it often and the students are excited. They also understand that nothing will change in expectation and routine. We will try to communicate via Skype on Friday, April

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

12 and again on Monday, April 20 at 9:00 am. Thanks for all of your good wishes!!

1st & 2nd Grade News

The students did an amazing job at our OPUS event! I was so proud of their performance. We are wrapping up our study of Antarctica and Emperor penguins. Next, we will study force and motion.

Thank you to those families who were able to attend our Author's Tea. The students have been working really hard on their stories and were eager (and nervous) to present them to you.

I appreciate so many of you taking the time to conference with me two weeks ago. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

3rd & 4th Grade News

We are entering a whole new world-literally! Putting ourselves in the role of Jack and Annie from the Magic Treehouse series, we will be traveling through space and time to learn about early Canada and the French Canadian settlers in Vermont!

We are still working on our story writing; we wrote stories for the 7/8 students to see if we could write what someone else wants and would like! Next we will be considering point of view. Each person in a room has a different perspective and each voice is interesting in its own way. We will write and rewrite the same events and stories from many points of view to see which perspectives we enjoy most! Think about how a birthday party is viewed by the person whose birthday it

is, the person's mother, a guest at the party, the cake and the dog! We will also explore the advantages of writing with "I" and being in the action or stepping back to report events from afar!

The 3/4 class is working hard and is looking forward to their big end of the year trip! The money raised by the class in the dessert raffle goes to this fun event! In years past, the trip has been just for 4th graders, but in the spirit of community and inclusion, this year's trip will honor the 4th graders but include the entire 3/4 class. We may have a small 4th grade only event, but it will be separate from the field trip! Details are still in the works and meant to be a surprise for the students! Information will be sent home directly to parents! Thank you for supporting us and we look forward to making the best of our last few months together!

5th & 6th Grade News

We have welcomed some important friends into our classroom over the last couple weeks. Firstly, Charlie and Harry Burt have returned from Wyoming; it's great to have them with us again. Secondly, we adopted two hundred salmon eggs that we will raise and eventually release. We have a chiller set up in our classroom that keeps the water between 35 and 38 degrees to match what the temperature of the river would be right now. We received the salmon as eggs and they have now hatched to become alevins, still very small and attached to their yolk sacs. While monitoring our salmon and learning about both the natural and unnatural laws that govern the salmon's life, we are now able to fully dive into our thematic unit on Pre-Columbian civilizations. There is so much fun

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

learning going on! As always, feel free to drop by any time or pass on any resources that you think would contribute to our learning.

7/8 News:

Congratulations to the 7/8 students for doing a fantastic job with this trimester's Opus project on the Silk Road. For those of you that did not have an opportunity to attend the performance, 7/8 students created and performed a play they dubbed *The Fresh Prince of Mongolia*. The theme song, rewritten by 7/8 students, was a parody of theme song from the sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. After researching key events, people and places along the Silk Road students embedded this info into the dialogue of their play.

Additionally, each student imagined their own unique journey across Eurasia and published their virtual "experiences" on a web log or "blog". Blogging for this assignment also gave students the opportunity to explore the genre of magical realism. We invite you to read and post comments online.

Miya-

Blog Title- SILk RoAd ExPrEsS
Blog Name- Jazz/Jasper
Blog Address- jumnomad.blogspot.com

Casey A.-

Blog Title- The Temporary Nomad
Blog Name- Zoey
Blog Address- anomad.blogspot.com

KCB-

Blog Title- The Rippin' Trip
Blog Name- Gummy
Blog Address- cjbnomad.blogspot.com

Morgan-

Blog Title- Time Trip
Blog Name- Mary
Blog Address- mpanomad.blogspot.com

Olivia-

Blog Title- European Traveler
Blog Name- Alana
Blog Address- ofhnomad.blogspot.com

Bridgette-

Blog Title- School Happenings
Blog Name- Bridgette
Blog Address- nomadbee.blogspot.com

John-

Blog Title- The Best Adventure You'll Ever Read
Blog Name- Katrup
Blog Address- jsnomad.blogspot.com

Devon-

Blog Title- Isabella's trip
Blog Name- Isabella {Bella}
Blog Address- isnomad.blogspot.com

Erik-

Blog Title- A Long Travel
Blog Name- Casper
Blog Address- cjsnomad.blogspot.com

Nichole-

Blog Title- The La La Land Machine
Blog Name- Alice
Blog Address- cnomad.blogspot.com

Tanner-

Blog Title- Epic Journey
Blog Name- Fabio
Blog Address- twpnomad.blogspot.com

A big "Thanks You!" to all who contributed to make this performance a success. It truly was a team effort.

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

We are also looking forward to our next theme of study that will center around the concepts of rational vs. faith-based reasoning. We will conclude the year by examining the impact that these two approaches had on our world during the early Renaissance and today.

8th Grade:

Reminder that registration forms should be filled out for the upcoming April 6th meeting at BBA. Mrs. Houck will meet with each 8th grader this week to discuss any questions students may have. Parents should review the packet from Phil Anton with their child and contact Mrs. Houck or Phil at BBA with any questions.

5-8 News: The trip that never was!

Despite our best efforts, it seems as if the middle school was just not meant to play broomball this year! Thanks to all that turned in the \$3 fee. We are attempting to plan another team-building, fun field trip for Friday April 10th. This is a half-day of school and the day before spring break. The destination will be determined at a student-led middle school meeting this afternoon. Forms will go home on Monday morning. Wherever we end up going we will need drivers. Please let Mrs. Houck or Ms. Tutsch know if you are available to drive.

Middle School Laptops

It is our mission to prepare our students for the future. Technology and the ability to access and document information through this form is an essential piece to this puzzle. Our world has and will become increasingly dependant upon technology to learn and share learning.

Responding to several parents' interest in purchasing a laptop for their own child, and the increasing demands of education, the Middle School is trying to find a way to enhance student learning by having a laptop for every student next school year. We are very grateful for the technology we currently have, yet as the Middle School grows, we are looking for ways to allow each student to have their own computer. Currently, 18 laptops are shared between the 5/6 and 7/8 classrooms.

To help us find a solution that can achieve increased technology resources, we have sent home a survey to 4th – 7th grade families. On the form, or in person, please feel welcome to share any additional feedback. Thank you to those who have already returned your forms, and we look forward to receiving every one else's to help us plan for the next school year. We understand that your response is not "written in stone;" we are simply getting an idea of what families can manage. Extra copies of the survey can be found on Ms. Tutsch's website under "Parent Communication." Thank you!

P.E. News

Thank you students and teachers for your hard work and dedication in making your original movement come to life. The OPUS event came together beautifully and it was a pleasure to work on it with all of you.

Chris Uchida

Spanish News

Phrases for the month of *Abril*.

By Casey Apps
7th Grade

Un Estudiante Ideal:

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

An Ideal Student:

1. Prepara su tarea todos los dias
Prepares their homework everyday
- 2: Nunca llega tarde a clase
Never arrives late for class
3. Sacar buenos notas
Gets good grades
4. Ayuda otros estudiantes
Helps other students
5. Escucha a la Maestra
Listens to the teacher
6. Nunca hable en clase
Never talks in class
7. Siempre estudia para los exámenes
Always studies for tests

Library News

Parents, did you know that we have books in our library for you too? Our newest acquisition is *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach The New Survival Skills Our Children Need—and What We Can Do About It*, by Tony Wagner (see A Word From the Headmaster). Stop by to see Mrs. Houseman on Tuesday or Thursday to get a library card for yourself!

Middle School Tennis

The West River Tennis Club has provided MSW middle school students a great opportunity. Starting on April 6, up to 12 students in grades 5-8 can take lessons and play tennis from 12:00-1:00 p.m. each Monday for 10 weeks. To register, students must turn in the Tennis Release Form, Medical Information Form, and \$50. Students are chosen on a first come, first served basis. Forms are in the office. See Greg Hasaj or the school office for more information. If you are a parent willing to drive, please let Greg or the office know!

Spring Afterschool Program

This spring Watercolor Techniques (Tuesdays) and Jewelry Design (Thursdays) are being offered. The deadline to register is Monday, April 6th. See the attached flyer and sign-up sheet for more information.

Box Tops For Education

Please keep sending in your neatly clipped box tops! Thank you for your support!

Lunch Stuff

Please help us keep MSW Green by packing everything your child needs to eat his/her lunch: napkins, utensils, etc. Also, please make sure that your child has his/her lunch with them when they leave for school.

Dressing for Changing Weather

With broad temperature changes during the day and wet spring weather, please remember to send in your children with appropriate clothing to wear for outside recess and PE. Layering is always best this time of year and our kids need to be outside whenever they can. Thank you.

Community Potluck and Taylor Farm Fundraiser

On Thursday 4/30 The Mountain School will host a community potluck and community contra dance to benefit the rebuilding of the barn at Taylor Farm in Londonderry. A winter snowstorm caused the barn to collapse, killing two cows and requiring the cows to be sent to other area farms until a barn can be rebuilt. Sally Newton, her husband Mike Donahue, and their band have all agreed to play and call the community contra dance. Taylor Farms has been deeply involved in education over the years, and

The Mountain School at Winhall

Beyond The Ordinary

has participated in The Mountain School's fall integrated curriculum for 5/6 called "Vermont Family Farms."

The potluck will begin at 5:30 p.m., and the dance at 6:30. The school will provide a main dish (ham) and hot and cold drinks. Guests are asked to bring an appetizer or dessert and a \$10/person (\$25/family) suggested donation for Taylor Farm. There will be a dessert raffle and Taylor Farm products will also be for sale. The Mountain School reminds everyone to support Taylor Farms and Buy Local!

Cinderella Ballet

The New York Theatre Ballet will be coming to the Southern Vermont Art Center on Wednesday, May 27. All performances (two daytime and one evening performance) are free of charge. Please see the attached press release or the poster in school for more information.

Art From The Schools

Come and view your child's art work Yester House in the Southern Vermont Art Center in Manchester. The showing is from 3/14 – 4/9. Visit their web site at www.svac.org/art_from_schools.html for more information.

Procedures for public participation at Board meetings:

Individuals wishing to address the Board must contact the Board Chair at least 3 days in advance of the Board meeting. The contact should include the subject of the presentation and the approximate time needed to speak. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

The Mountain School Board of Trustees:

Debbie Peretz, Chair * Betsy Wadsworth, Vice Chair * Thom McMahon, Treasurer * Robin Apps, Secretary * C.J. King * Virginia Morgan * Chuck Scranton* Norm Stachelek * Ric Swenson *



Thank you to the Cyr family for their donation of a 10X10 storage space for our School!