There is an expression, “You’re a long time dead” and I would like to extend that expression to “You’re a long time an adult” as an entry point when addressing the issue of parents’ expectations for their own children. One of the central tenants of Waldorf education is allowing children to fully experience childhood. At the base of this discussion is the question, “What is the mission of childhood?” And hopefully, as parents who choose to send their children to a school with a very strong philosophical base, all of you have spent time thinking about whether the school’s approach matches your own. The “hidden agenda” in Steiner schools is that each child allows him or herself to be born to a particular couple so that s/he can work as an adult in freedom on achieving something important for him/her – a life mission. Everything else we do in this school is based around close observation to find ways to achieve that end.

When we watch the process of growing from conception to adulthood it is very clear that it is a long, drawn out process that passes through particular, observable stages. If you ignore the external womb of marsupials, no other advanced animal gives birth to such primitive young and then takes a fifth or so of its lifetime before gaining all its adult functions. Within this long childhood there are quite specific mental capacity changes that are reliant on accompanying physical changes that cannot be sped up. A great example of this is how the decision-making part of the brain is simply not mature enough to expect teenagers behind the wheel of a car – or pretty much anywhere for boys – to act rationally in difficult situations. When stupid accidents occur, it is often the physical brain that is the problem not the attitude of the teenager.
Steiner is asking us to have confidence that this slow maturation really has a focus and is not a waste of time. More importantly, he emphasised the dangers of bringing things that are entirely appropriate for adults into childhood. It is a parallel argument to genetically modifying the world around us. Do we really think we can improve on Nature and if we are improving particular features, what are the costs in other areas?

Nowadays, there are many subtle ways where we interfere with our children’s full enjoyment of childhood – which we usually do with the best of intentions. A major stressor for parents is hoping that their child will be able to “make it” in the big, bad adult world and also thinking their child is getting behind compared to their peer group. To this end, all sorts of adult tools are given to children (e.g. mobile phones) that create complications (e.g. cyberbullying) that the children are usually too young to know how to deal with in a healthy way. Boys’ play fighting is a fascinating counter-example as it seems to usually occur within understood natural limits. There is almost always a pain barrier that they are actively seeking but know not to cross. As soon as one of them reaches that point he will signal it to the opponent; it means the opponent has “won” and they usually stop immediately. The loser’s needs are respected. With mobile phones, on the other hand, pain can be inflicted without immediate feedback from the victim, so more and more pain can be administered until something breaks – which sounds rather like modern drone warfare.

The trap of all information technology tools is that, from a pre-teen’s point of view, the tools are never as good as an enthusiastic adult. It’s like eating junk food, children enjoy it on one level but if you watch really closely it doesn’t fill them up like going fishing with granddad.

Please don’t think that Steiner teachers are luddites when it comes to IT. Rather, we are trained to look at how events affect the children as they pass through their developmental stages. Often there are medical reasons but it is also easy, through poor parenting/teaching, to trap children into continuing to behave childishly when under stress. This always occurs when we force/allow children to jump over stages of development. Then we are a very long time an adult acting like a child.

Robert Gillman

Welcome to our new families in Term 2:
Ordacia Glindemann in Class 3,
Lilli Barndon in Karri Kindergarten,
and Phoebe West, Rana Rost and Olivia Harvey in Silver Birch Kindergarten.
We wish you an enjoyable time in our school community!

Violin News
Wishing the Eisteddfod Violinists all the best for their performances on Thursday the 22nd of May. They all have been practicing really well and their pieces are sounding beautifully.
Kind Regards, Jude

Calendar of the Soul—Week 30

Autumn now subdued
My senses’ strivings for enchantment.
A stifling, hazy mist swirls
Within the revelation of the light.

I myself look into the wide expanse of space,
And see the winter-sleep of autumn.
Summer has surrendered itself entirely to me.
Parents Singing Group

Mondays 9am-10am

This is a lovely, heart-warming way to start the week. We are a fun and supportive group. No experience necessary, just bring your voice.

Craft Group

Wednesdays 12.30pm until pick up time

Come along, bring your own projects or let us help you pick one. Have a cuppa and a chat, we would love for you to join us!

Kathy Martin

News from Playgroup

We have been busy as usually in Playgroup, baking, painting, singing and enjoying our stories.

In the past few weeks we have welcomed in some new families to Tuesday & Thursday’s Playgroups and also some new families to the baby group.

We also welcome those children who have moved up to Playgroup from the baby group. It is lovely to have so many new faces.

On Thursday the 12th of June, all Playgroup families are invited to come and spend the morning in the Silver Birch Kindergarten. It is a good opportunity for parents to see how the Kindergarten runs and to ask Christine any questions about their child's transition from playgroup to kindy. Playgroup children will join the kindy children in a morning of baking bread, singing and some outside playtime.

Please meet at the playgroup at our regular time of 9.15 and we will walk together through the school to the Kindergarten. More information will be handed out in Playgroup and if you have any other questions about the day please ask Clare or Jade for more details. We look forward to sharing this day with you.

A big thank you to Kylie who has made us some more beautiful felt toys for us to use in our stories.

Warm wishes, Clare, Theda and Jade
News from Silver Birch Kindergarten

Dear Families,

As the days grow cooler our need for warmth grows too. Kindly keep an eye on the spare clothes, as with the wet sand and grass, Sophia and I make lots of clothing changes throughout the week.

Our class meeting is cancelled for next week as our fence is still being constructed. Once it is completed we will hold a lunchtime meeting for us all. The children play well throughout our sessions though and are simply too busy with each other to explore further. Sophia and I are always close by working with our garden and mulch-collecting helpers. This week, rock finding has been of great importance.

Our Winter Festival comes closer as the weather settles into its cooler to colder pattern. We will send you information soon. Until then, do stay warm.

Sophia and Christine

News from Karri Kindergarten

It’s now halfway through week 4 and I feel the children have begun settling into our rhythms once more after the holidays. It does take a little while, they seemed tired the first week back. We went on our second walk last Tuesday and once again were blessed with a beautiful sunny Autumn day. We didn’t walk far, just to the same area the Easter festival was held, and I realised the joys of returning to familiar places, where the children feel comfortable, and can re-discover, and embellish constructions begun last time. More sticks were added to strengthen mia mias, and moss gathered to carpet them within, and games were continued from where they left off last time. The children seem so happy and content in our magical forest playground.

A quote from one of our K6 girls on our first adventure; “I wish we could stay here always”. We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful natural area close by and to offer our students such an enriching time each week.

Last Monday we had a very well-attended parent-teacher meeting. Thank you so much for coming along, it’s always wonderful to have your enthusiastic input and participation. I think it worked well having a hands-on experience, as well as some conversation on a topic of interest. A summary will go home this week. If you have any suggestions for topics and experiences for future meetings, please let me know.

Sunshadow slippers have arrived at last, so if you have ordered a pair or two, please pay and collect them from Silvia in the office.

Lorelle did a great job informing via email about the presence of head lice (thanks Lorelle), but just in case you haven’t heard, or need a little reminder....they are about, so please check your child’s hair, and treat if necessary.

Warm wishes, Denise
News from Class 1

Hello everyone,

Cl. 1 is once again on their journey with the three travellers, Yanko, Mirra and Meayh, to create the world and discover the capital letters. This Main Lesson aims to introduce the letters through song, story, movement, picture and poem giving each an individual experience. It will go for four weeks and cover the remaining consonants and vowels. I’m sure the children will be keen to tell you a tongue twister or two.

The lyre workshops have been very successful with many participants overcoming their fear of noisy machines and creating a beautiful instrument for their child. Many thanks to Chris Robins for his patience and understanding.

We have started knitting this term and the children have been keen to practice. It has been exciting to watch their progress as they struggled to learn something that takes a lot of manual dexterity and hand to eye coordination. Learning to knit develops resilience and it has been very rewarding to see the delight on their faces once they first managed to finish a row.

The Poetry Club is happening every Friday and the children are welcome to share a poem with the class. Kylie has made us an amazing Poetry Club book and it will be sent home with a different child each week. If it comes to your house you are invited to write a family favourite poem in it. The poem can be long or short, simple or difficult, be sung or have actions, whatever you want. Just to be clear, all of the children can share a poem on Friday but only one new poem a week will be written in the Poetry Club book. A couple of dates for your diary:

Thursday 29th May we are journeying on the Harewood Forest walk for a picnic from 9 – 11:30 (weather permitting).

Our Parent Meeting is on Sat 21st of June from 10 – 11:30 and it would be wonderful if all parents could make it. As well as providing basic information, parent meetings are a prime opportunity to strengthen the adult social community. This ultimately benefits each child as an individual and the class as a whole. Can each family please bring something from nature that represents your child?

Cheers, Karen
News from Class 2

Cl.2 loved the sleepover! Our favourite part was “All of it.” Chrystal was snap happy, so see Cl. 3 news for photos! It was great to come together with a purely social intent. I am sure many friendship bonds have been strengthened. Well done on both classes for such good behaviour, it made it easy for everyone to really enjoy the experience.

We have loved pets visiting our class for news. So far we have had guinea pigs, a dog and chickens for our gentle petting pleasure.

Stories of the Saints are coming to a close. I have seen the children really ‘get it’, they are more accepting/respectful of each other and I see more good deeds every day.

With Shanti’s long awaited return from her desert walk, we will be touching on some geography of desert habitats before launching into a maths main lesson on place value. We are still practising times tables in our morning circle, please feel free to practice these at home too.

Thank you to those bringing in waterproof coats and shoes as the weather gets wetter. Nuts at morning fruit break are also great for sustaining the concentration of the children during main lesson. Extra recorders are still available from the office for $13, hopefully everyone will have one to keep at school soon! Thank you to Lorelle, Simone and Katie for their help on Wednesday afternoons in craft. It is lovely to have you...now that we have finished sewing our Mother's Day hearts!

Kind Regards, Sonja
Kia Ora GHSS friends and family,

Cl.3 had a great time on our walk to the Denmark Post Office last week. I awoke in the morning to rain on the roof and was saddened to think I would have to cancel the excursion. This was met by laughs at school. Denmark children are used to walking in the rain, they laughed. The children were excited to cross the creek at the Riverside Campground one by one, holding my hand. From the other side of the creek we began our senses walk. The children walked most of track in silence, observing the surroundings with their different senses. We noticed things like raindrops on fungi, moss growing on tree trunks, a school of fish, the sound of birds chirping and branches and leaves crunching under our feet. I laughed at the faces of customers when they saw a long line of children, queuing up to purchase their stamps. This being said, the children were efficient at telling the shop assistant where their letter was going, and excited to see them disappear into the shiny red box outside. Thank you to Catherine and Tom who joined us on our excursion. Also to David, Lydia, Cathy, Silvia and Robert who drove us back to school from the nature playground.

Wow, what a great sleepover we had on Friday night! The evening started with the children enthusiastically setting up their beds in Cl. 3, and outside games while it was still light. When appetites were worked up the children devoured pesto pasta and apple crumble (thanks Jade and kids who helped make this) around the fire (thanks Eliza for getting it started for us). With full bellies we went on to play spotlight under the (near) glorious full moon. Oh, how it filled my heart to hear laughing and playing on such a beautiful evening. Next we headed into Cl.2 to make huts, and as much mess as possible. The buzz of being able to play like that in a classroom at night was written all over their excited little faces. Next on our itinerary (which the children helped to create) it was time to lie down and listen to fairytales. During my time as a nanny I learnt that there is an art to storytelling at bedtime. The desired outcome being that, as your voice gets softer and softer the children fall asleep. Well, this worked for most of the boys and some of the girls. Those who were still awake at the end had a wonderful time giggling and chatting, "that's what you're meant to do on sleepovers, Chrystal" they told me.

After a couple of hours of intermittent sleep (I could have never estimated that many toilet trips, hehe) it was time to rise and shine. 6am saw most of the children playing in Cl. 2 until it got warm enough to play outside, and lastly a hearty bowl of porridge and honey to conclude our first school sleepover.

A big thanks you to Jade, who joined Sonja and I for the evening of fun.

Warm wishes to you all, Chrystal
News from Class 6/7

Here we are, only at the beginning of week 4 and already so much has been accomplished. We are coming to the end of our Main Lesson on Aboriginal Culture. The students have really enjoyed learning about the Aboriginal beliefs around the Dreamtime, land and the rites of passage for young men. Lastly, we are exploring the creation stories of various native animals like the Kangaroo, Emu and Bush Turkey.

At the beginning of last week class 4 had the opportunity to follow a real Rainbow Serpent in the form of the Bibbulmun Track Waugal! We walked from Conspicuous Cliffs, stayed overnight at Rame Head campsite and walked the next day to Peaceful Bay. Each student walked over 15km and should be very proud of their achievement! Thank you to all of the parents who volunteered their time to shuttle students to and from the drop-off and pickup points and a very special thank you to Sarah, Gay and Neil who joined us and ensured that we all got to our destination safely.

Of course, the class 5 students will be enjoying their own walk next week, trekking their way through the Tingle forest of Walpole. These camps are a great opportunity to spend time in nature, commit to a physical challenge and bond as a group. My hope is that there can be many more such camps in the future. If you have volunteered to drive Cl.5’s to and from the drop-off points for the camp, please confirm with me or Liz Jack (class rep) ASAP.

Alex

News from Class 4/5

Eliza asked me if I would like to write something up to tell you all about the camp. I really enjoyed the journey with the children, so I’m very happy to oblige.

Sunday night, I think most of use parents had something to worry about. Missing items, packs too heavy so some pre-trip nerves. I hoped that my one practice walk would be sufficient and my knee would not embarrass me.

Anyway, Monday morning early it was chaos at the classroom, swapping and picking up equipment with excited children and worried parents. Soon enough though the adults had the extra tents, bits and pieces loaded up and we were in the cars and off through the misty rain.

At Peaceful Bay it was still grey and raining lightly. We got our packs and ponchos on, took our 1st photo and headed off across the beach. Fresh sea air refreshed us as we descended the stairs to the beach. The waves crashed rhythmically on the sand. I was at the back and could see the colourful troop being led by Ben and Jim across the sand and over the rocks.

On the way we saw fish jump in rock pools, a massive, curling, blue swell and a sand snowman created just for Jack.

Along the way, Ben was on form, cracking jokes and proudly posing with his hand made stick.

Lunch was at a small beach where Asher and Luka immediately commenced fishing. Joe managed to get completely wet whilst seeing how close he could get to the waves.

The track started to get hilly at this point, and a few showed tiredness, so Eliza made sure everyone was hydrated and carried packs for those most in need. Caer became convinced that a large piece of rope would come in handy... The country was bright and green having started recovering from bushfire. Some interesting plants and bugs were spotted.

Finally after a long climb we reached the Rame Head Hut, where the kids frantically vied for the best camping spots and pitched their tents. Some tent peg pinching was going on, but soon they came to a happy compromise. At that point I found the missing bag of tent pegs...

They then rapidly set about dinner, and soon all were well fed. Eliza made hot chocolate for everyone, and were soon after sent to bed. In the hut we were plagued by mosquitoes. Jack never stopped tossing and turning all night.
Suddenly the camp was woken with excited voices. Olive amongst others ever lively was trying to coordinate something, I'm not sure what... It was still dark and the adults rose bleary eyed. As the light started to dawn, we could see mist flowing over the peninsulas and valleys. It was an awesome sight to see the sun come up. Izzy spotted 'some random guy' waving on a hill nearby. Waving back she wondered why he was using one arm then another. Soon after we discovered it was Jim doing his morning Qi-gong!

Once packed up we proceeded over coastal dunes with many ups and downs. It was incredible scenery. On this day we made an effort to keep closer as a group, in order to promote more team spirit. If ever Maia asked for any help it was very politely and with a big smile.

It was quite hard going, but eventually we reached the Conspicuous Cliffs beach for a lunch break. The boys quickly got the fishing rods out, with Luka immediately asking a fisherman on the beach for a loan of some bait. The water was cool and blue, the sun shining bright. We fixed a few potential blister spots, and made a few pack adjustments.

I asked Eliza who was going to get to carry the Salmon if Luca caught one. On his last cast he actually hooked one, but fortunately perhaps, it got away.

Continuing on, a number of students noted that the track was turning back East and we were somehow getting closer to the tall pine tree at Peaceful Bay! Jack spotted kangaroos on a hill watching the group in front of us passing by. It was hard going, but eventually we stopped for lunch in a tunnel of she-oak trees, heading North towards the forest. I saw little of Emil, he travelled with his mates Toby, Luka and Iyke chatting and laughing. Me being often at the back saw little of him, and I expect he was pleased about that ;)

Invigorated after a good rest, we were able to continue towards the highway that seemed elusive. I got a turn at the front and with Luka's help started an impromptu group rap that helped things move along for a while. Eventually Annette was spotted so had to show herself. We were very glad of the supplies, and there was much to celebrate with smiles all round. Molly, when asked if it was hard work, replied to me 'not really' with that cheeky grin.

We then had to tackle a long, steep hill. Katherine’s shoes broke, so for a good while she trooped on walking barefoot for a while as it was still sandy soil. Her resilience and strength are to be admired. The forest became thicker and whilst talking with Jim we suddenly came onto a track to find all the children encircling a huge tingle tree. It’s twisted form reaching up to the sky with the class giving it a big hug.

The rest of the walk to the Giant’s Hut was pretty strenuous. A quote from Jack was ‘I didn’t want to do this walk anyway. Mum made me, and even Dad thinks it’s a good idea’. However we all eventually got to camp, and as soon as packs were off, tents were setup. Two unsuspecting hiking couples moved their tents sensibly a little farther away from the mayhem. By dark, dinner was nearly ready. At bedtime, Eliza made it clear that this time, no-one was to be making noise before it was light!

The country we were now in was very much Tingle country with those huge trees with dark shelters at the bottom. At the Tree Top Walk, the ‘proper’ toilets were popular, as was the Holden under the tree exhibit.

At lunch, sitting on a small bridge over a stream, Jack invented the ‘Hippy Show’ lifting everyone’s spirits. Caer walked along with me some way, and we talked about school and growing up. Much later we finally arrived at Sapper’s Bridge. All the children cooled their feet in the river, and as expected out came the fishing rods just in case there were fish to catch…

Warm cakes, tea and coffee spurred us on towards the hut. It was not far, but for the tired it seemed to take forever to reach. We arrived late. There were some fairly grumpy other campers when we proceeded to setup and get cooking dinner. It looked like it would be stormy, and because many tents were already pretty wet, we set most up under the hut. At one point Ben had misplaced his boots and needed to go to the toilet. I said ‘use mine if you like’. He returned later and said with perfect timing ‘John... your shoes are too small!!’. That evening Eliza cleverly distracted the children with games so that the other campers would be less disturbed. That said, the children’s behaviour was exemplary, well mannered and considerate.
We left a little later the following morning, giving more time for play (and fishing). Immi sailed along, often central in the games and fun. There was plenty of giggling and mucking about, so we found ourselves in the end a little late in leaving. We all set off to meet Annette and Dave some way down the track. Unfortunately Katherine’s feet had become extremely painful, so she needed to rest them for the day, to return in the evening to Coalmine Beach. It was quite a gruelling but beautiful long walk to Walpole. It was sometime on this day that Toby took to testing the strength of a variety of sticks he came across on the walk, challenging Ben to numerous good natured sword fights until he had just a stump in his hand.

At lunch we stopped at the giant Tingle where everyone went a bit loopy, greatly entertained by impromptu shows particularly again from Jack. Sarah, Katie, Jack and myself perhaps encouraged the silliness by arriving at the tree dancing, playing uke and rapping...

As we descended to the coast, we could see the land as it met the sea through intermittent rain and sun. By this time Asher was finally getting low on energy, however on seeing the campsite close, begged Eliza to go fishing ‘Eliza, Eliza, Eliza, Please, Please, Please, Please…?’

Eventually we arrived at Coalmine beach campsite. Luka and Emil promptly caught a couple of Bream. Thanks to the parents who cooked up a storm for the hungry campers, it was a fun night with music and mucking about.

Heavy rains in the night lead to quite a few wet tents. On reprimanding the boys for being up before dawn, they informed me that their tent was floating and ‘can we go fishing?’. The girls tent was much the same, but I think they were more sensible and went to have hot showers. Dawn over the inlet was stunning. We were up before the pelicans.

Tia throughout was quiet but happy. Sometimes I’d see her staring off into the distance.

The walk to the bakery was easy and short with no packs. We took the concluding photo, got our pies and then headed to the park to burn off some excess energy...

I’ve probably missed all sorts of things, but that is the best of my recollection. Thank you all parents, Eliza and kids for a great experience.

John Davey
Hi Everyone,

First of all, Thank you so much to the parents that got back to us about being on the ‘Soup Day Team’. It’s looking good for Soup days to go ahead in term 3! We will be in contact with our lovely Soup Day Team closer to the end of term 2 to get the soup ball/bowl rolling.

Winter Festival
The next event on the P&F radar is this year’s Winter Festival. It’s on 20th June which is only 4 weeks away. There’s lots to organise to make this a truly heart warming magical event for the school community. The gathering of supplies can begin now. Do you have:

Wood for the bonfire?
Trays for serving of soup?
Lanterns to contribute to the lantern walk?
Gnomes and crystals to contribute to the spiral walk?

And closer to the date do you have:
A nice big supply of apples to use to hold candles for the spiral walk?
Greenery for the spiral walk?

This year we will distribute the 4 main jobs into teams so if you would like to be on one of the following teams please also let us know:

Lantern Walk
Spiral Walk
Soup, Bread and Apple Crumble
Bonfire

For the last few years we have warmed our bellies with yummy, pumpkin soup, bread and apple crumble. Why not get organised now and use up the extra pumpkins etc. you have from your harvest and make your contribution now and freeze it?

So, if all of this is clear as mud or if you would love to help us, please let Miranda (0447820468) or Gillian (0438965425) know.

School Recipe Book
You may remember we were gathering recipes last year to publish in a super, yummy school recipe book? Well we have some ripper recipes and we will be finishing the book and publishing it very soon. Now is your last chance to contribute yours or your family’s special, delicious recipe for the whole community to enjoy. If you have some, please pop them in to the office asap.

The next P&F meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd June (different day because Monday is a public holiday) at 12pm in Peppermint Cottage Playgroup.

**THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT MEETING!!! IF YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE WINTER FESTIVAL PLEASE COME!!!**

Or if you can’t come but can help out make sure you let us know. It makes it really tricky to organise a festival without volunteers!!

Kind Regards, Miranda Miller
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Free to good home, one budgie, male. Please call Ilan on 0421 784 187.

Mums Raising Teen Boys @ The Dome Café Albany
Wed 4 Jun 9:00 am to 12:00 am Fee: $15 p/p
As Mothers we need to have some knowledge of our son’s world

Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) & Other Jobs @ Family House - North Rd
Fri 6 Jun 9:00 am to 11:30 am Fee: $15 p/p (Concessions Avail.)
Tue 16 Jun 9:00 am to 11:30 am @ The Dome Café Albany
Explore the strengths and challenges of a FIFO relationship.

Term 2 in Denmark
Mums Raising Teen Boys @ Denmark Youth Centre
Wednesday 28 May, 2014 9:30 am to 12:00 am
Fee: $20 p/p (Concessions Avail.)
As Mothers we need to have some knowledge of our son’s world, appropriate knowledge of modern technology, allow decision making, risk taking and the steps to independence.

Mums Raising Boys (0-12 yo) @ Denmark Library Meeting Room
Wednesday 11 June, 2014 9:30 am to 12:00 am
Fee: $20 p/p (Concessions Avail.)
However well-prepared mothers are logically, the emotional response to having a boy is often still, ‘Wow! This is unknown territory.’ It is true that for many mothers, the idea of raising a son carries its own set of worries

Bookings Essential - Phone: 9845 7700
Email: Albany@wa.relationships.com.au