

PERSPECTIVES ON SUDBURY EDUCATION

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A note from the editors . . .

The time was 1967. A small group of parents living in the Greater Framingham area had been hunting all over the country for a school that met our requirements. We had travelled far and wide, visited and read about all sorts of places — and had come up empty-handed.

The main thing we all had in common was a deep conviction that the existing educational system would do our children irreparable harm. We felt we had to do whatever was necessary to provide the kind of environment we wished our children to have.

So it was the Sudbury Valley School was founded in 1968.

The starting point for all our thinking was the apparently revolutionary idea that a child is a person, worthy of full respect as a human being. These are simple words with devastatingly complex consequences, chief of which is that the child's agenda for its own life is as important as anyone else's agenda— parents, family, friends, or even the community. In the school we wanted for our children, their inner needs would have to be given priority in their education at every point.

*The Sudbury Valley School Press, *The Sudbury Valley School Experience*, (The Sudbury Valley School Press, 1992)*

The Sudbury Valley School has been the inspiration for the founding of over a dozen schools, both in the U.S.A. and internationally. Some schools, already up and running, have adopted the Sudbury philosophy. The Sudbury Education Resource Network's mission and the intent of *Perspectives on Sudbury Education* is to support the Sudbury model schools and to expand the understanding of the Sudbury model of education. Articles that contribute to that end are accepted, with gratitude, for consideration in this publication. The deadline for the next issue is November 15, 2001. Please send them to the editors:

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The Sudbury Education Resource Network is an independent organization that is neither sponsored by nor under the auspices of any Sudbury model school. *Perspectives* is dedicated to the people who make this extraordinary experience available for the students enrolled in these schools. Thank you.

Of This I Have No Fear

by Larry Welshon, Alpine Valley School

A former colleague from my public school job asked me how my son Ethan was doing at AVS. He asked three questions: Was I pleased with his academic progress? Do we give him (and the other kids) any sort of achievement tests? Will I just let him be surprised when he “hits the ACT and SAT?”

After giving short answers to his questions, I reflected on how his questions illustrate the contrast between the way most schools operate and AVS’s philosophy. Fear is at the root of all of his questions, and trust is the basis of my answers.

These questions illustrate the role of fear as a motivator for learning and a justification for testing in public schools, and offer an opportunity to contrast that mindset with the philosophy of Alpine Valley School.

“Are you pleased with his academic progress?”

The quick answer is, “Sure. He’s doing fine.” But the deeper answer is that academic achievement is of minor importance compared to Ethan’s opportunity to grow and learn without coercion and fear.

When Tammy and I realized that we were going to be parents, we looked into every schooling option for our future son, and found that there were no schools in the area appropriate for our child. With our experience as teachers, we knew that fear in schools produces negative consequences. As our son grew toward school age, we saw the benefits of trusting him and following his lead.

All parents are familiar with this fear: “If I make the wrong choices as a parent, my child may end up a failure.” Many parents send their kids to public school because the fear of making the wrong decision makes them powerless to resist the inertia of the status quo. They would rather choose traditional school than risk the burden of a decision made with knowledge. But do I bear less responsibility if I do what the crowd does?

AVS parents chose this alternative for their children because they decided that its philosophy and structure match their kids’ needs. Even so, it’s difficult to give up our illusion of control and to turn away from a familiar system. For the kids, on the other hand, trust and freedom create empowerment and self-determination.

Back to the questions. Even if I did care about “academic progress” per se, I would be wary of how it is measured. Achievement tests are, at best, only estimations of knowledge and skills. Despite “improvements” in testing over the years, the test makers still are looking for the ideal of “authentic assessment.” I know students who do very well on these tests who cannot have a coherent conversation about subjects that interest them. I also know students who fail these sorts of tests, yet are wiser and more full of common sense than many adults.

AVS parents trust that their children will learn these things just as they learned to stand, walk, and master their native language. We did not use fear to teach Ethan to walk and talk. His own internal motivation drove him to learn these essential skills. Can you imagine the damage we would cause children if we insisted that they roll over, sit up, stand, walk and talk on our timetable?

Compulsory reading, writing and math cause great harm to many children. Recently I heard on the radio that ninety-five percent of the books sold in this country are bought by only five percent of the population. Perhaps this is related to the fact that most children were compelled to read. Given this country’s low literacy rate, perhaps our education system should back off the use of fear as a motivator and try trust instead. Teachers use fear to motivate students to read every day, in the form of implied threats regarding their students’ future or their failing certain tests. Teaching reading has become an unhealthy obsession among educators; unfortunately, the kids suffer the effects.

Based on recent newspaper reports, fear is also being used by the State of Colorado to compel school districts to raise reading test scores. Fear will follow the chain of command from the State

Board of Education to local boards of education to teachers to students. Consider also the threat of tying teacher salaries to student test scores, or the threat of an entire school district losing its accreditation. The use of fear is everywhere.

One of AVS's greatest assets is the example set by Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts over the past thirty years. SVS graduates were allowed to trust themselves from a very early age, and have created success in life in a wide variety of occupations. This form of education offers young people the opportunity to develop into life-long learners who are able to decide for themselves what is important, rather than relying on the judgment of others.

"Do you give the students achievement tests?"

The short answer is no, we do not. We trust that students are discovering what they need, and that no test could ever measure the appropriateness of each individual's path of development. In a school where kids discover their strengths and weaknesses very early on, fear does not have to be used as a motivator. They are motivated by interest, desire and curiosity. By contrast, in a system preoccupied with assessment, fear is ubiquitous. The damage caused by traditional schools' constant testing is significant in terms of children's self-concept. Achievement tests cause even the most die-hard individualists to begin ignoring their own self-concept, replacing it with authorities' arbitrary assessments. Inappropriately, achievement tests are also used to reassure parents, teachers and policy-makers that the decision they made to subject children to traditional schooling was correct.

The fear-driven acceptance of achievement testing denies human variation and accentuates what is deficient over what is excellent.

What matters in life — whether you can do long division by hand or whether you know how to treat others fairly? Whether a kid knows the historical roots of the Constitution of Colorado or knows his own strengths and weaknesses? Whether one is punctual to required classes or is a self-starter? Whether a student can parrot back the latest politically correct theory or is responsible for his actions?

Of course, it is not as black and white as I imply. I do believe, however, that AVS students have more of an opportunity to develop their intellects, interpersonal skills and self-awareness. Personal freedom and the school's democratic structure give kids practical experience that will serve them well in life.

The fear-driven acceptance of achievement testing denies human variation and accentuates what is deficient over what is excellent. How many of your adult colleagues have the exact same aptitudes and skills? The incredible variation among humans gave rise to the division of labor. I build houses better than I hunt, so I build for you and you hunt for me. Specialization and diversity enhance our quality of life.

When we allow children's innate talents to surface, we marvel at what they do. Think of Albert Einstein and his opinion of traditional schools. He did poorly in school, and found it to be unbelievably stifling. Constant testing reminds kids of their failures and weaknesses — or, for high achievers, makes them dependent upon others' approval. Students' efforts to improve are largely due to fear of failing on the next test. Tests and grades can also be corrosive to parents' relationships with their children. Poor performance becomes a source of tension, concern and disappointment, leads to overzealous intervention, and attacks the child's self-confidence.

"Will you just let him be surprised when he hits the ACT and SAT?"

People who live their lives consciously are rarely surprised by anything that is predictable. Students at Sudbury schools learn to live life consciously. For those intending to attend college, the ACT and SAT are predictable. AVS kids will, if anything, be surprised at how easy these tests are because they will approach them just as they have approached their lives while at AVS: they'll articulate a goal, decide what they need to attain it, and follow through to make the goal reality.

Students in our school are motivated not by fear but by desire, curiosity, and clarity of intention.

They know what they want and they go get it. Some kids may leave AVS without knowing for sure what they want, but they will be fully aware that they are responsible for their own lives.

Students at Alpine Valley School have time to explore their strengths and weaknesses. They are not burdened by conceptions of what others think is important. When they decide what they want, it will come from within — not because society, parents or teachers decreed it. When graduates leave AVS they will leave with a desire to pursue their lives, meet any challenge, and seek their happiness. Might they have a gap in knowledge here and there? Yes, just as we all have at various stages of our lives. When you are motivated by a deep personal desire to make the best of yourself, all the structured curriculum of traditional schools doesn't amount for much when compared with self-knowledge.

Look around and see how much of society's motivation is based in fear, and how much damage that does to us all. Look at how much freedom we are willing to give up for an illusion of security. I am not willing to sacrifice my child's freedom to placate my fears. I want the best for Ethan. I want him to learn to be responsible for his actions and to be motivated by a desire to explore the world and to be productive. He will learn to be responsible for his life, and I'm quite sure he will be happy after leaving AVS. Of this, I have no fear.

Wherever we go, there seems to be only one business at hand — that of finding workable compromises between the sublimity of our ideas and the obscurity of the fact of us.

Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*

An Invitation to the International Democratic Schools Conference

From August 15 to 23, 2002 Tamariki is hosting the International Democratic Schools Conference. From its small beginnings nine years ago, when only four schools participated, the conference has grown to be the major meeting place for a wide variety of educational and child-rearing groups.

Last year's conference in Tokyo was attended by children, parents and school staff from Britain, North and South America, Israel and Palestine, Europe, Russia and the Ukraine, India, Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Japan and New Zealand. Tamariki hopes that as many Sudbury Schools as possible will come to share their experiences with everyone.

The cost is estimated to be between \$300 and \$400 US, depending on currency values at the time. The cost includes all food, lodging and transport to the conference.

The conference will be a mix of local academics and people telling it like it is. Then the week will have people arranging their own activities. It will be during a school term in the southern hemisphere so people will be able to visit the school while it's in session. New Zealand is a beautiful country and offers skiing and hiking nearby.

For more information, contact Tamariki School, 86 St. John Street, Woolston, Christchurch, New Zealand; telephone 011 64 338 49014; fax 011 64 338 49029; by email at Tamariki@clear.net.nz; or on the web at www.tamariki.school.nz.

To find out more about previous International Democratic Schools Conferences, go to: www.educationrevolution.org, or www.edrev.org/archives/IDEC-info.htm.

Quiet Desperation vs. Passion For Living

by dee Vogt, *The Circle School*

So often when I read, hear, see or experience something, a little voice in my head (or maybe my heart and soul) says, “That’s why what’s happening at The Circle School is so important.” Sometimes in the most unlikely places the affirmation of The Circle School’s program lies waiting. Waiting to be discovered. Waiting to be shared. So I take this opportunity to share a recent find with you all — from Tom Brown, Jr., a prolific author of field guides for nature observation and books on Native American spirituality, and a nationally known leader of wilderness exploration and survival experiences. In his newest book “Tom Brown’s Field Guide to Nature and Survival for Children”, he shares his concerns about the impact traditional schooling has on children:

One of the first lessons that society and school teach our children is routine. Even before some children enter school, they are already established in some sort of routine. As children enter school their lives become linked to a clock. Everything becomes regimented: a time to work, a time to eat, and a time to play, whether the children feel like it or not. There is little real time for children to be uninhibited and free. The clock, the regimen, and the endless routine preclude any spontaneity. Unfortunately, with the way society and most schools are now set up, there is no alternative to this routine. Society seems to think that children are better controlled if they are treated like cattle.

This routine is further intensified as we force children to adhere to the beaten path. Pressures of society, school, and parents, force children to live and work for the future. The spontaneity of living fully in the moment is taken away and the children must concern themselves with doing well in school, finishing high school, going on to college, finding an excellent job, getting married, having a family, and working until they die. All efforts seem to focus on the path, and the path gets so worn and so deep, it soon becomes a rut. The ruts are so pervasive and oppressive that the children cannot even see over their sides; there are just goals at the end of a long tunnel, and nothing else. Excitement, adventure, and children who follow their hearts are rare. All too early in life, children begin to feel what Thoreau called “quiet desperation.” They sense there must be more to life, but they do not know how or where to find it, nor can they stray from the ruts of school and society.

As children grow older, they not only lose a sense of self, but lose a sense of adventure. Midway through school, many children are lost with no real alternatives in life. To dull the pain of boredom, many seek the oblivion of alcohol, the false escape of drugs, the adventure of vandalism, and sometimes the freedom of suicide. We as parents and teachers must realize the deadening effects that such routine can have on our children’s lives, spirits, and senses. Certainly there is no real alternative now to school or the demands of society, but we can take steps to minimize and override the effects that these ruts have on our children. To free children from the ruts is to preserve their spirit. Teach children to build a passion for living each moment fully, for seeking adventures, and for following their hearts. Minimize and strip the power away from the ruts of society and school, and once the power is removed, children will flourish.

{Tom Brown’s Field Guide to Nature and Survival for Children; Judy Brown, Heather Bolyn, Trip Becker (illustrator), Tom Brown, Jr., Berkley Publishing Group, 1989.}

I see my children flourishing! Though I sometimes cringe at the proportion of our family’s annual salary that goes to finance Aaron and Austin’s education, I feel so grateful to be able to provide my children with an experience having a value that goes beyond any price, an experience that empowers them to flourish. I know that this year at TCS has challenged me to stay on my growing edge, to live each moment fully, to follow my heart. I have accepted that challenge sometimes reluctantly, sometimes joyfully, always courageously. I see others — staff members, children, and parents — facing and meeting that same challenge every day. What a gift our work at building a passion for living fully is to our children, to ourselves and to our society.

with permission, from www.CircleSchool.org

Stolen Childhood

by Marko Koskinen, *The Finnish Start-up Group*

Our compulsory education system steals from every child thousands of hours of their time giving them almost nothing in return. Is there any reason for such theft? Could our schools be different? Could attending a school be actually fun?

I'm sitting in a house in Worcester, Massachusetts, surrounded by a snow storm. It's almost nine o'clock in the evening. What should I write? How could I shortly tell what I've been trying to tell for the last five years of my life? Maybe I just say it straight and see what comes of it.

Our education system is totally out of date. It doesn't currently serve anybody, but rather functions as an end in itself as a coercive institution oppressing young people. So there, I said it. Now I only need to justify what I just said. And that's easy.

First I want to stress that every teacher does his/her best all the time, usually in a very hard environment and that the teachers aren't to blame but rather the system. I want to say exactly what I just said, that our education system is out of date; its foundations, theories about learning and teaching, are totally behind the times. Actually they've never been up to date. Our schooling system functions mostly on the same principles that the medieval cathedral schools functioned. Sure many things have changed, but the changes have usually been cosmetic and forced by the changing culture.

Our school system was never meant to enhance learning, individual freedom or human rights. It was made to keep the people in order and discipline; it was made to level the people, enhance the industrial revolution. Schools have nothing to do with equality in nowadays' society. Institutions have a tendency of staying the same, generation after generation, and the educational system is a perfect example. John Taylor Gatto writes about the questionable history of our education system in his recent book, *The Underground History of American Education*.

Well, what's wrong in the education system then? Let's play a little bit with numbers. How long would you suppose it would take to study comprehensive school mathematics, if you were really interested in it? 20, 30, maybe 50 hours? How many hours does the school spend to "teach" it? Mathematics is being taught about 3 hours a week for nine years, making a total of $3 \times 40 \times 9 = 1080$ hours. 1080 hours (!!!) when you could have studied all that in maybe 50 hours or so if you really were interested in it. So the efficiency ratio is $50/1080$, giving you less than five hours from a hundred of efficient working hours! In a week there are around 30 hours of school and there are about 40 weeks of school a year and the compulsory school lasts for 9 years. When we count together also all the other subjects "taught" whose efficiency ratio is probably close the same as in mathematics, we end up finding out that the school steals $30 \times 40 \times 9 \times 0.95 = 10260$ hours of their childhood. 10260 hours, that are of no use for the students. Is it any wonder then that the schools are full of bullying, learning disabilities, concentration problems, ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and a lot of other things; when the students are totally made numb with boredom with subjects that if they were interested in them, they could learn in a fraction of the time that they are forced to wear the school bench. Oh yeah, I forgot the homework

I could also calculate how big a partition of waking hours of a high school student the school steals, but I could assume that you who have been taught more than thousand hours of mathematics, could count it yourself. Is there any reason for such theft? The first argument probably is that if nobody went to school, nobody would learn anything. The second argument could be that children must surely be taught the basics so that they can survive in this world and can choose different things in their life. The third argument could be that if they had no basic education, they couldn't get to the higher education. The fourth argument could be that if people weren't forced to learn many different things, they could never know what they really wanted in their life or what they are gifted in.

The reason for me to come here across the big sea was to see one of the schools that has proven all

these four arguments and many more false at once. Sudbury Valley School, in operation since 1968, has proven that without any coercion or even offering of classes, the students of the school have been successful in their lives; they've been able to get to higher education; they've learned many different things, e.g. all have learned to read. There's a comprehensive study made of the former students and their careers that clearly shows that the students have not only survived but have been successful and in no case has the lack of formal education been an obstacle for higher education. By the way, in Sudbury Valley, it only takes about 50 hours to learn all the comprehensive school mathematics.

The school functions as a democratic community, where there are at the moment about 200 students aged 4-19 years of age and 11 adult staff members. The students are obliged to attend the school for five hours a day, five days a week. This is the only "coercion" and even that is forced by the state laws. It doesn't seem that the students are forced to be there though, because many students spend a lot more than the required time at the school. When at the school, they can do whatever they want in the framework of the rules decided together. Nobody tells them what to do or where to be. A common principle among the staff is that they don't even propose what the students "might want" to study or do and even if they did, that wouldn't really make much of a difference.

The school is governed by a weekly school meeting, where every student and staff member, regardless of age, has one vote. School Meeting decides about all the issues concerning the everyday life from budget to the hiring and firing of staff.

The purpose of the staff in the school is to be available if somebody wants to have lessons in some certain subject. The staff members also work to hold the structure together and stable, and bring with them the adult experience. Adults also have different kinds of special assignments determined by the School Meeting. No classes are usually organized unless someone asks for them, so everything happens from the initiatives of the students. The school has no curriculum or just certain subjects. Everything is possible, but nothing is mandatory.

What would have you done with all those thousands and thousands of hours of yours that were stolen?

In democratic governance there usually is some kind of institution that enforces the rules. In Sudbury Valley this function is taken care of by the Judicial Committee, which consists of students of all ages and one staff member. If someone breaks a written rule that has been decided by the school meeting, anybody can file a written complaint. JC processes daily the written complaints and investigates the possible "crimes". If the defendant pleads "guilty", the JC decides a reasonable consequence for that person and the consequence usually is related to the offense made, — for littering the usual consequence is to take care of one day's trash. If

the defendant thinks the consequence is unreasonable s/he can bring the issue up at the school meeting for further discussion.

So what do the students then do at the school, if they aren't guided to do any "traditional" school-work? Guess! What do children and youth usually do when they have the freedom to do whatever they want to do? They play, discuss, watch television, play video games, surf on the internet, play and listen to music, read books and magazines, draw, make crafts and pottery, cook, play chess, basketball, snowball fight, cards, ski, organize excursions, listen to stories, write plays, dance, develop photographs, and every now and then they get into something so much that they want lessons in it. What would have you done with all those thousands and thousands of hours of yours that were stolen?

Another reason for me coming to see this special school was that we're planning, with a small group, to start a similar kind of school in Finland. At the moment the nearest similar school is in Denmark, the Naestved Fri Skole, that I visited a year ago. Other similar schools are in operation in Australia, Israel, Canada, England, and of course in the United States, and the interest seems to be growing rapidly. In the United States, a general dissatisfaction with the public education has led to a big popular movement. At the moment there are about two million home-schoolers, who have de-

cided to educate their children at home and more are coming. Also the more informal Charter schools have become in highly popular, currently with more than 250,000 students. In England there can be seen a similar movement forming. When does this movement hit Finland? Hopefully as soon as possible.

Education dominated by preconceived images of what must be learned can hardly be educational. Authentic teaching and learning requires a live encounter with the unexpected, an element of suspense and surprise, an evocation of that which we did not know until it happened. If these elements are not present, we may be training or indoctrinating students, but we are not educating them. In any arena of action - rearing children, counseling people, repairing machines, writing books — right action depends on yielding our images of particular outcomes to the organic realities of ourselves, the other, and the adventure of action itself.

But this yielding requires us to confront our fears once more. Behind our obsession with projecting results and gearing our actions toward them is our need to control the other and the situation; and behind our need to control is our fear of what will happen if we lose control. If we lack confidence that life is trustworthy, that a life of live encounters will take us toward wholeness, then we will forever feel the need to manipulate, and goal-setting will be one of our major strategies. But once we begin to see that life is a live encounter whether we like it or not — once we begin to understand that we can't get out of it, so we must get into it — then this concern for results will take its proper place in our active lives. . . .

Our culture's fearful obsession with results has sometimes, ironically, led us to abandon great objectives and settle for trivial and mediocre ends. The reason is simple. As long as "effectiveness" is the ultimate standard by which we judge our actions, we will act only toward ends we are sure we can achieve. People who undertake projects of real breadth and depth are very unlikely to be "effective," since effectiveness is measured by short-term results (never mind the fact that such people may be creating cultural legacies by their "failures"). But people with small visions will win the effectiveness awards, since those projects are so insignificant that they can almost always "succeed" (never mind the fact that they contribute nothing of real merit to the commonweal).

When I think of the great works we are called to in our lives, works we avoid at peril of our souls, I think of works in which we cannot possibly be "effective." I mean such things as loving other people, opposing injustice, comforting the grieving, bringing an end to war. There can be no "effectiveness" in these tasks, only the commitment to work away at them, and if we judge such work by the standard of measurable outcomes, the only possible result will be defeat and despair. . . .

Again, results are not irrelevant. We rightly care about outcomes; we have to live with them, and being accountable for them is part of right action. But to make results the primary measure of action is a sure path to either inanity or insanity. The only standard that can guide and sustain us in action worth taking is whether the action corresponds to the reality of the situation, including the reality of our own inward nature.

(Parker J. Palmer, *The Active Life: Wisdom for Work, Creativity, and Caring*. Harper Collins, 1991.)

Only the Hopeful Start Schools

by Nan Narboe, Cascade Valley School

With a show of hands, a dozen parents and teachers voted to start a school where children could work and play without interruption — the way they do at Massachusetts’ Sudbury Valley School. Daniel Greenberg’s *Free at Last* and John Holt’s *Schooling Without Coercion* had convinced us. Students should learn what they want to learn, and learn it in a democratic setting.

“Most educational philosophies are either too permissive or too controlling,” said one woman, like me a mother who ended up working at the school. “I could see where they went wrong, but I couldn’t see a way to combine freedom with responsibility, until I read about SVS.”

We wanted what Sudbury Valley School had and we wanted it in Portland, Oregon. We set to work. We brought Greenberg to town to give a speech — a speech so rousing that one man who heard it stayed up all night, then showed up the next day to work on the school. We adopted Sudbury Valley School’s by-laws as our own, then met weekly, Sundays at 3:00, to compare notes and make decisions. We studied state law. We borrowed money, found a site, set tuition and chose staff, all by majority rule. We held events to attract potential students. Obstacle after obstacle gave way. Proudly we set the date for our school to open, Cascade Valley School, the school we all wanted.

Then the students arrived — and our troubles began. The previously unified group fissured into difference after difference. The language we shared (“self-initiated learning,” “students pursuing their interests without interruption,” phrases appropriated from Sudbury Valley founder Daniel Greenberg) had camouflaged our differences. We had rallied around concepts that we now enacted in amazingly varied, and eventually opposing, ways. Action revealed differences that language had slip-covered. “Initiative” and “interruption” are ideas, interpretations. They exist in the eye of the beholder, not in the external world. They are not real, not in the way that students approaching the door on the first day of school are real. Not in the way that actions are real.

Before the students arrived, I thought everyone at CVS shared my values. I thought everyone wanted what I wanted: students doing whatever interested them (building forts, making music, complaining that they had nothing to do). I thought everyone scorned what I scorned: training children to replace their experience with someone else’s judgment - teachers enthusing “Good jumping!” when young children do what young children naturally do. Or principals determining who “wins” student body elections.

At our school, what to learn would be up to each student. Voting would be real — that is, each student and each member of the staff would have a vote, an equal say, with the majority determining everything from the school’s rules to its staff. There was no clearer way to demonstrate that Cascade Valley School trusted its students’ decisions, trusted its students. Nor could any curriculum be more demanding.

Preview: The summer before the school opened, I got a glimpse of how I thought Cascade Valley would work: The doorbell rang and my four-year-old rushed to the door, excited that people were meeting at our house. Then Julia saw someone she didn’t expect — another committee member had brought along her daughter, also four years old.

“She can’t come in,” said my daughter, pushing the door shut. “She can’t play with my toys. I don’t want Veda in my house. Why is she here?”

“They’re here for my meeting,” I told her, and opened the door. Julia retreated to her room, insisting the other child stay out.

Both Veda’s mother and I took short breaks to comfort our distraught children. Neither of us suggested ways they could solve their dilemma: we hadn’t been asked.

That meeting introduced me to the first parent I had ever met whose commitment to treating children as competent equaled my own, a stance I came to characterize as *The Real*. She did not think

of her daughter as helpless — she saw her as someone with a problem, a problem the child had the resources to solve. (Eventually Veda asked me if I had any toys she could play with. I brought her a stack of my picture books and a wire whisk.)

As the hopeful will, I generalized. I imagined that our meeting depicted values held by everyone starting the school. In fact, it described one of two competing dreams that people had for the school.

Two Dreams: Two dreams draw people to Sudbury Valley’s version of democratic schooling. I call one dream and its proponents The Kind, and I call the other dream and its proponents The Real. The contrasting perspectives, minus each side’s inflammatory language, boil down to this:

The Kind want a school where children are happy and involved, where they are treated well — a kind place. They theorize that the school’s tolerance and understanding will produce students who behave in tolerant and understanding ways.

The Real want a school where students can do something about feeling sad, bored or mistreated — something concrete, something real. They theorize that such a school will produce students who can identify what they want and devise ways to get it.

The Kind emphasize students being, or becoming, kind or happy or good. Proponents of this dream focus on aspects of the Sudbury Valley model like “students pursuing their own interests.” Self-initiated learning fits their anti-authoritarian values and meets their prerequisite that students enjoy themselves. As they see it, developing individuals who feel good about themselves (and whose behavior will then serve the greater good) is the school’s purpose.

The Real believe in self-initiated learning as well, but their definition focuses on what students learn by struggling with problems that matter to them — the reason I neither forced my daughter to share her toys nor suggested ways the other girl could entertain herself. They want the school to promote effectiveness, the capacity to move skillfully from wish to idea to follow-through. In line with their beliefs, The Real champion structures that assure students access to power, structures like the School Meeting, where each student and each member of the staff have a vote. (The School Meeting — pioneered by England’s Summerhill and democratized by Sudbury Valley — determines the school’s rules and expenditures: whether to mend or replace a broken basketball hoop, whether to expel an unruly student, standards for using the school’s computers, cleaning procedures, and so on.)

The Kind, on the other hand, argue that people of different ages have such different skills that it hardly matters whether everyone is entitled to vote at the School Meeting. They see the students as disadvantaged, despite their numerical capacity to outvote the staff. The Kind therefore try to soften outcomes they see as cruel and The Real see as consequential: outcomes that derive from reality and not the age or the verbal skill of the miscreant. The students running a snack bar included a sticky-fingered pal in their operation — and lost their money. A student threw a bike in the school’s pond — and got suspended: not for getting angry (that was his business) but for doing something that endangered the school’s lease. Divisions like The Kind and The Real are artificial, of course, but labeling our differences helps me parse Cascade Valley’s tumultuous first year. The Kind and The Real provide an overview, an orientation. I need one. I’m still startled by the year’s vehemence, by differences so extreme they split the school. I’m still stunned that a group of people who succeeded, against long odds, in opening a school ended up drawing a line in the dirt and slugging it out.

Differences: Differences between The Kind and The Real surfaced as soon as the school opened. Interventions that seemed reasonable to The Kind, with their focus on happiness — “redirecting” a bored child, for instance, by suggesting something fun to do — horrified The Real. Boredom is instructive, they insisted. Some choices lead to tedium, others to fascination. Disengaged students need time, not rescue: time to discover which choices lead where. Hands off!

But The Real also maintained that staff who withheld their opinions and their votes, to “see what the students wanted” were patronizing them. Students would not become more adept, per The Kind’s intention, as a result of the adults around them deskilling. Besides, they urged, democracy requires

everybody's best efforts: a ten-year-old student's best efforts, a forty-year-old staff member's best efforts. The Kind countered that the school's unfamiliar structure overwhelmed students; unless adults took a back seat, students would not speak. Over and over, the staff debated the difference between responsiveness and rescue, between clarity and rigidity — debates that did more to develop positions than to resolve questions.

Parents did more than debate. The Kind among them attacked the hands-off members of the staff, those who most treasured students working things out for themselves. Why were they ignoring children who needed their help? Should a school even *expose* children to adults who don't care about them?

One parent made the Orwellian suggestion that we require attendance at School Meeting "so students will realize they're free to decide what goes on at the school."

More than philosophy was at stake. The amount of adult intervention advocated by The Kind was anathema to those who most valued student initiative. The Real's belief that unhappy students would, eventually, do something about their discontent required The Kind to tolerate levels of distress they considered inhumane. Neither side, in good conscience, could go along with the other. From the day it first opened, September 7, 1991, Cascade Valley School was on a collision course.

Factions: People on both sides hoped the school could find a middle ground. People on both sides hoped we were fighting about tone and not content.

The Kind thought those on the other side talked tougher than was called for, "But maybe that's how they sound under stress" — a kindly assumption.

The Real questioned whether they weren't being too hard on their counterparts. "It's not as though we know how to implement these unfamiliar ideas any better" — a realistic consideration.

We could have used two columns, one labeled *Kind*, and the other *Real*, to tally most first-year votes. We debated everything from these competing perspectives — hours, salaries, scholarships, the authority of the School Meeting itself. Like the oil and vinegar in a homemade vinaigrette, our positions separated out over time, becoming distinct and visible.

Even if the entire group had been of like mind, we would still have had problems. The line between freedom and license is hard to find. Finding it while learning a new paradigm is even harder. Adding to the difficulties inherent in starting a school was the tendency of the dominant culture to either indulge children or control them. We wanted a third option: genuine choice and with it, genuine responsibility. We frequently slid past it. We did what beginners do, we lurched our way toward consistency.

"When students mess up, there should be repercussions."

"No, not 'repercussions.' There should be 'learning experiences.'"

"Wait a minute, the entire incident is none of our business."

"As soon as something affects the rest of the school, it becomes our business."

Our meetings looked like tennis matches, with heads (and positions) swiveling from side to side. Everyone took a while to find the target zone. This was highlighted by the message another member of the first year staff left on my answering machine: "Driving home, I understood why you got so annoyed with the position I took in today's School Meeting. You were right. I should have confronted the students involved. Thanks."

My face flushed as I listened. She had left me the message I had intended to leave her the week before, when we had landed on opposite sides of a different issue. On the way home, I had realized that she was right.

Flip-flopping between positions is typical of beginners. It takes a long time to practice any methodology consistently or well, and even longer to feel it in your bones. Starting a democratic school is a doozie of a training program, the steepest learning curve I know. None of us had grown up with what we wanted our students to have. We had to create a democratic school inside ourselves as well as

externally: in the office, in the cubby room, beside the pond. In conversations with students, with parents, with one another. It took us the better part of a year. It took that long to begin to distinguish between supporting students and indulging them, to recognize the difference between predictability and inflexibility. Not that we were skilled, but we had begun to think in ways we did not — and could not — think in September, when we opened the school.

Mistakes: Cascade Valley School made an impressive number of mistakes its first year. We recovered from enough of them that the school is still standing. A mistake that will have consequences past the year 2000 was assuming that our first-year enrollment would top 32 students. All our finances were based on that goal, one we didn't meet until our fourth year. As a result, we're considerably in the hole. It's a mistake I find endearing, a memento of the ignorant enthusiasm it takes to start a school. We fully expected parents to flock to the school, eager to enroll their children. After all, we were in love with the idea, we were turning our lives inside out to start a radical, democratic, initiative-based school. My dismay over the battles of our first year has receded. So has the chagrin I feel about certain of my contributions to them. What I feel instead is calm conviction. Starting a school is so sizable a task, and democratic values so little practiced, that no SVS-inspired group could possibly stay out of trouble. Maybe no group with democratic ambitions can, whether the group is the local food co-op or the U.S. Senate.

Happiness: Some adults seem drawn to democratic schooling by visions of kindly, contented, justice-loving children. As soon as our first-year students found meetings boring, elections difficult or the school's requirements demanding, The Kind got frantic. In their version of a well-run school, nothing would make anyone unhappy. Unhappiness proved that something was wrong. The clearer their position came, the greater my amazement. I thought democracy assured everyone's occasional unhappiness — its virtue lay in spreading it around.

*I thought democracy
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I thought the purpose of the school's Judicial Committee was, in a sense, unhappiness. The J.C. had the job of communicating the larger group's unhappiness with certain behaviors. It had the job of protecting individual rights while upholding the school's rules — partly by figuring out, case by case, what would make rule-breakers unhappy enough to change their behavior. Sentenced to replace the 35-cent pencils they had appropriated, two of our younger students "forgot" to satisfy their sentence for days on end. They made new excuses daily: they didn't have their allowances, their mothers hadn't taken them to the store. The Judicial Committee extended the date for completing their sentence, and again they delayed, coming up with still more excuses. The J.C. discussed their non-compliance, and someone proposed yet another extension. Then one of those serving on J.C. (a pre-teen who had himself resisted J.C.'s authority when he first came to the school) exclaimed, "Wait a minute! They're ignoring us and that's not right. Let's come up with a sentence that matters to them." So the Judicial Committee excluded the students from the sandbox until they replaced the pencils, which they did that very afternoon. Those testing how much they can get away with are engaged in important learning; so are those — 3 or 4 students and a member of the staff — whose job it is to hold the line.

Politics: Proponents of The Kind elected students to school offices because "they need the experience," not because they would get the job done. The Kind seemed to find politics distasteful and politicking contemptible, whereas The Real — well, The Real thought politicking got things done. When The Real voted to suspend students for conduct they thought jeopardized the school, The Kind worried that the students would then view the school as "uncaring." Proponents of The Real expected people of all ages to learn from their mistakes, lobby for what they wanted, and go along with what the majority decided. Students who argued that the Judicial Committee should not charge them with violating a rule, for example, generally pleaded "guilty" if they were charged anyway. The majority had spoken. One man remained calm while the group passed proposals he utterly opposed. He thought

sorry outcomes would follow, but he also thought that the outcomes he predicted would change future votes. Either that, or he'd discover that his predictions were off. The Real's commitment was to a specific way of doing things — democratic governance, majority rule — and not to the results of a given vote or to a psychological outcome like “happiness” or “empowerment” or “harmony.”

Assessment: The Real supported initiative-based learning because they had never seen anything else work. They told stories about no longer remembering subjects they had been forced to learn, and still remembering ones they had chosen for themselves. For The Real, students who complained of boredom were detoxifying, recovering from years of forced feeding. Next they would figure out what interested them; eventually they would do something about it. The same way that members of the staff, equally new to democratic schooling, would eventually discover how to do their jobs.

It took everyone a long time to realize that those assessing the school were coming up with different evaluations because they — we — were using different criteria. And different memories: The Kind's schooling stories focused on subjects they didn't value at the time, but now were glad that someone had insisted they learn. The Kind saw suffering where others saw struggle. They then invented schemes to entertain students they thought were bored, arguing that before students could make choices, they had to “be exposed to what's out there.” Doubtful that student inertia would recede, they demanded proof that it had. In the meantime, they argued, staff should keep students occupied. Over time, it became apparent that The Kind and The Real used words like “initiative” and “self-selection” to mean different things:

One mother screamed that the CVS staff had refused to teach her six-year-old to read. The staff thought the boy had plenty of moxie. He had asked for our help with other projects. Since he hadn't asked anyone on the staff to help him learn to read, we figured that reading was the mother's agenda. She thought the staff was tangled in derivative theory, and short on simple common sense. After all, whenever she asked her son, “Don't you want to learn to read?” the boy always answered, “Yes.”

The mother's reasoning struck me as goofy at the time. Now ours seems equally suspect. The boy could have been learning to read on his own, or from other students. Our reasoning illustrates the power of cultural assumptions, especially those so widely held that they are rarely named, like “children learn to read from adults.” Although Sudbury Valley's literature specifically states that few of their students have ever used adult assistance in learning to read, our habits of mind had not yet shifted. More importantly, we did not know that they had not yet shifted.

This phenomenon underlies my wariness when people with brief exposure to the SVS model — a couple of years, say — want to “improve” on it. Ideas that are out of the ordinary take a long time to understand, and even longer to apply intelligently. I therefore assume that “reformers” are trying to make the SVS model familiar, more compatible with their personal values and/or the values of the larger culture. I also assume that such reformers do not recognize that familiarity is what motivates them.

Those of us who spent the year “holding the line,” insisting that we do things the ways they're done at Sudbury Valley, did not claim that using Sudbury's methods would assure literacy, for example. We just knew that other methods — whatever their claims — wouldn't either. As pragmatists, we rejected them. Besides, The Real's passion was not for students acquiring specific skills. Our passion was for students running their lives.

Accusations: What The Real lacked in rhetoric they made up in obstinance, repeatedly insisting that some principles were central to the school and not to be tinkered with. Charges that they were inflexible or “just copying Sudbury Valley” did not shake them, although accusations that they were damaging children did. Some of the bruises each faction inflicted on one another came from the crucially different ways they evaluated the school. The Kind saw children who were happy, or not, and used that assessment to form their opinions. They were for the people and procedures they believed made children happy; they were against those they believed made children unhappy. For them, what to

do was clear and the time for change long past.

The Real saw things differently. They saw vibrant children (sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy) who were doing well despite the school's first-year fumbles. Moreover, The Kind and The Real handled their concerns in diametrically different ways. When The Kind perceived that something was wrong, they urged change, the sooner the better. The Real responded to similar situations by taking a deep breath and trying to do, more skillfully, what they had been doing all along. They believed that applying Sudbury Valley's procedures (even if ineptly) would prove, at a future date, to have been the right thing to do. The Real had no interest in starting a school per se, only in starting a school like Sudbury Valley School. And for them, it was too soon to tell whether Cascade Valley would succeed.

Anxiety: People who found resistance where they had expected cooperation, and anxiety where they had imagined contentment were understandably upset. Worse, they felt tricked. The Kind had anticipated a school where happy children achieved conventional goals without coercion. That's what they'd signed on for.

"My child isn't learning to read" — apprenticing somewhere exciting, going on enough field trips — "and you don't even care!" such parents fumed. Their expectations had been thwarted, and they were too upset to consider the possibility that their expectations — and not the school — needed to change. They had no patience for theories that children who spent as much time as they wanted building forts in the blackberry bushes, the year's favorite activity, were increasing their capacity to focus, a capacity that would serve them whatever they decided to learn next. How to read, for instance. What they saw (kids spending all their time playing, staff refusing to require even a single course) upset them.

The Real had their bad moments too — the first year was hard on everyone but the students — but they tended to read anxiety, including their own, as a sign the school was on track. Allowing young people to take charge of their lives spooks most people. So does choice, if the choices include students "wasting time" or getting into trouble. "Anxiety," pleaded The Real, "is the cost of living outside generally-held assumptions. For the school's offer of freedom to be genuine, we have to tolerate our own discomfort."

"Discomfort is supposed to spur change. Greenberg says so right here," replied parents who believed that their distress signaled general wrack and ruin. Since they were uncomfortable, the school should change. People like me, reading the same literature, had envisioned student discomfort motivating students to change. It was the "divided by a common language" issue yet again. Each reader had pictured the school that fit that reader's history and politics and parenting practices, which is the danger of starting a school from books. Anxiety fills the gap between what people imagine will happen and what actually happens. Reading Greenberg, people got the idea that students at Sudbury Valley School are busy all the time. Students at Sudbury Valley School *are* busy all the time, but they are busy doing whatever interests them: playing guitar, dozing in the sun, turning cartwheels, hanging out. Greenberg describes them as busy because, in his eyes, they are. He describes them as learning prodigiously for the same reason.

The parents who read Greenberg or attended one of our Open Houses formed more conventional images. If science was their Johnny's favorite subject, they pictured Johnny spending all his time at CVS doing science. They formed images that assumed limited alternatives: science *or* English, reading *or* math. But at Cascade Valley School, Johnny had a different set of alternatives. He could wander off by himself if he felt like it, read to a little kid, organize a game of tag or a change in the school's rules. He could pursue whatever interested him, including topics generally thought of as "science." When the school didn't match people's internal images — images that none of us knew were images but believed were uniformly-held goals — we became anxious.

"Why not post a list of the classes that staff members know how to teach? Then students would know what's available."

“Don’t you see? A list like that would define learning as something that teachers organize; it would label specific activities as the useful ones.”

Something was wrong, our nervous systems thrummed. Wrong! Unaware that part of what felt so wrong came from inside us, we looked to our surroundings. Something was wrong out there — wrong with the school, wrong with the model, wrong with the people on the other side. Specific things were wrong, of course: CVS was a start-up operation. But much of everyone’s distress, I now believe, came

She would have a haven, protected from the “more is better and earliest is best” thinking that dominates contemporary education.

from the difference between what people expected and what they got. Only the hopeful start schools. We were all hopeful: the parents who had enrolled their children, the students themselves, those who signed on as first-year staff. We had promised ourselves a wonderful new school — forgetting that voracious anxiety accompanies anything new. Some who came to Cascade Valley School delighted by the idea that students would choose their own activities, couldn’t handle the rest of the package: votes that didn’t go the way they thought they should go, students not getting what they wanted on the first

try. They had signed on for kind and happy.

Lifetime Applicability: I had signed on for Sudbury Valley School’s tough-mindedness, for its emphasis on students’ rights and its equal emphasis on their responsibilities. I had signed on for adults who respected play, who appreciated independence, who didn’t need to be needed. I had signed on for annually elected staff in place of tenured teachers and entrenched bureaucracies. At last, education reform that amounted to something.

It wasn’t that I had some perverse attachment to difficulty for its own sake. I just couldn’t see much difference between what others claimed were Good Schools and Bad Schools. True, conventional schools were meaninglessly rigid but progressive schools were just as meaninglessly flexible. In neither case could students use the schools as practice for the rest of their lives. Adults don’t have to raise their hands to go to the bathroom, as Bad Schools force their students to do. But they’re not coaxed into playing nicely or given stickers for following the rules either, as in schools that call themselves Good. For me, the hope that Cascade Valley School would guarantee my four-year-old a childhood was sufficient reason to start a school. She would have a haven, protected from the “more is better and earliest is best” thinking that dominates contemporary education. She would have a variety of people, including adults, to study. She would learn that rules are to be obeyed and rules are to be changed, that individuals have rights and so do groups. That is, she would learn the perspective and skills American citizens need.

The First Year: I had expected students to be on edge most of the first year, incredulous they had so much freedom, worried there was some catch. I had expected adults to sympathize while holding the line. Wrong. Most students quickly found ways to feel comfortable. Four- and five-year-olds who began their school careers at Cascade Valley were busy and happy from the beginning. School-savvy older students manipulated as many of the staff as they could, and looked after themselves the rest of the time. Even the students who daily pleaded for rides to the deli seemed okay with “Are you kidding?” as the standard reply. They were taking a sounding as much as finagling a ride.

Adults, on the other hand, lost it. Staff and parents had — and caused — far more trouble than students. Adults of the kindness persuasion raged when their discontent didn’t spur reform. I raged too. We had agreed, I kept insisting, we had agreed — on philosophy, on procedure. The Real mistook their passions for the group’s desires. The Kind mistook their anxieties for the school’s deficiencies. Everyone felt betrayed. Each faction had imagined that everyone supported whichever was their version of the school: The Kind, The Real. Each tried to convince the other. Each found their own data compelling and their own suggestions sensible.

“Students are suffering,” declared The Kind, “they need more structure, more encouragement, more opportunities.”

“Students are struggling,” countered The Real, “they need more time, more trust, fewer interruptions.”

Conflict dominated Cascade Valley School’s first year. Not only did the two versions of the school differ (each, of course, claiming Sudbury-derived authority) but neither felt they could live with what the other wanted. Finally, the faction I’ve called The Kind withdrew their children, reducing the school’s enrollment by a third. The school clicked into place the next day. Students whose parents believed that children required constant supervision (and whose behavior proved their point) were gone. What remained, by and large, were students who had been reared to behave responsibly.

Second Ascent: The year was brutal — I have never been through anything like it. But then, I had a long way to fall: I had the idealistic belief that I had found a group of adults whose passion for democratic education and self-initiated learning matched my own. In fact, people ran for staff because they needed a job. In fact, parents enrolled their children because the school they preferred had a waiting list or charged higher tuition.

I kept notes from the very beginning, hoping to help others start SVS-inspired schools. I pictured a how-to book, with chapters on public relations, on fund-raising, on hiring first-year staff. I played with *Second Ascent* as a title. “Second ascent” is the mountaineering term for climbing a mountain that’s been scaled once before. Second ascents are easier, experienced climbers say, because you know the mountain can be climbed. As our first year got harder and meaner, my hopes for the book constricted. Finally, all that remained was the title.

Then I learned there was another book entitled *Second Ascent*. Its author was a man mutilated in a climbing accident. He kept trying to scale world-class mountains with what remained of his arms and legs.

“That pretty much describes us and what we’re trying to do,” I muttered, mouth set in a grim line. This, six months after we opened — that’s how embattled I felt. That’s how hard it is to start a school. How hard, at any rate, for people with hopes and illusions, and who but the hopeful ever start anything?

Long Distance: Phone conversations with Sudbury Valley School’s founders helped me survive our contentious first year. The day after the school split, I telephoned my mentors. I told them that I had always assumed that starting a school would be hard.

“But if you had tried to tell me how hard, I wouldn’t have believed you — I simply did not know that anything got this hard. Luckily, my positive expectations were off too. Everything about the school, both bad and good, has been far more intense than anything I could have imagined.”

They knew what I meant, they said. That’s how they had spent the past twenty-some years. “You mean,” I squeaked, “it’s always like this? This combination of worse-than-I-could-have-imagined and better-than-I-could-have-hoped, and sometimes I’m wrong and sometimes the other person’s wrong but after a while, it doesn’t matter and you keep going because the school has to be there for your child?”

They started to laugh. “We knew you had no idea what you were getting yourself into. But we didn’t think you would have understood, if we had tried to tell you.”

Could they have told me? Would I have understood? What if they had warned me that concerns about “kindness” frequently mask condescending views of children? What if they had predicted that I was so accustomed to adult privilege that I wouldn’t know how to proceed in its absence? What if they had cautioned me that few of the people who claim to support a radical concept have the conviction it takes to follow through? What if they had warned me: once parents see what student choice looks like in operation, all hell will break loose?

Would their admonitions have alarmed me? Absolutely.

Would they have stopped me? I hope not.

Looking Back: The image that stays with me is this one: students rushing outside to dance on the school lawn in the first hard rain. The rain, mixed with hail, came down at a slant. The rain looked like the drawings of rain in children's books. It hit the ground so hard it bounced back up. First a few of the older boys, then several girls, then a mix of the younger students ran out into the rain, to whirl and slide and dance. Looking up, getting soaked, they laughed as the rain pelted them. The students paused to catch hailstones, marveling at their size, then went back to twirling. Dancing. Then and there, I stopped weighing the hardships of our first year. I was where I wanted to be, on the porch at Cascade Valley School — giddy, exhausted, grateful for my good fortune.

Five years later, I finally understand why the image stays with me: You get drenched starting a school. Pelted. Stung. But the rain that comes down harder than you ever thought rain could come down, bounces back up. Dance.

A note from the editor:

Sadly, ten years later, Cascade Valley School did not reopen in the fall of 2001.

The Boulder

by Sharon Kane, Sudbury Valley School

While teaching piano lessons I heard an unusually large number of voices outside the window. I got up to check and saw the yearly ritual of digging up the sandbox happening one more time.

This is a seasonal ritual
This ritual announces the onset of
 Spring into Summer
A warm balmy day
Blue skies and slow moving puffy clouds
Big kids, little kids, digging and hauling
 and directing and calling
A giant hole and a giant sand pile next to the hole
Someone is standing chest deep in the hole, shovel
in hand, just like last year
Just like the year before last
Scooping, shoveling, throwing
Only this year something is different
More kids, all standing off to one side
Staring into the hole
Pointing, chattering, hopping around

There is a Boulder!
In the hole!
A boulder twenty four inches in diameter!
How many pounds does a twenty-four-inch-in-
 diameter boulder weigh?
Can we move it?
How can we move it?
Are there enough of us?
What's the best way?

Someone has a plan
Someone brings out a long, thick rope
A little more digging
A little more hauling
A lot of speculation

Lots of wide eyes
Lots of chatter
Bodies jumping and moving and looking
 and wondering
Can we do it?
Are we strong enough?
Are we strong enough to move a twenty-four-inch-
in-diameter boulder
Sitting five feet deep in a hole in our sand box?

Someone secures the rope around the boulder
The two ends appear out of the hole
The large group of kids melts into two groups
One group at each rope's end
Everyone spontaneously falls into formation as
each takes their place on the rope
Big kids, little kids, medium kids, strong kids,
weak kids, girl kids, boy kids

Someone counts off
And they begin to pull
And heave
And strain
Each group in its proper direction
Backing up slowly
Step by step
Every pair of hands held tightly on
 every inch of rope
Slowly
Carefully
All feeling the weight of the boulder they have
 spontaneously joined together to move
Step by step
Backing up
Slowly
Carefully
Working together with
One Mind
One Body
One Goal
One Thought

Slowly the boulder appears just beneath
 the sand's edge
Just a little more, now
Lift it out and move it far enough from its hole
Slowly release your grip and
Let it settle
Let it sink
Sink onto the sand

Smiles
Cheers
Applause
High fives
Hugs
Roars
Whoops and
Hollers

Together, at Sudbury Valley
 we move mountains with our bare hands!

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Sacramento, CA 95818
Phone: (916) 452-2203
Fax: (916) 731-4386
Email: info@sacval.org
Web: www.sacval.org

The San Vicente Sudbury School
103 South Cooper St., Apt. 4
Silver City, New Mexico 88061
Phone: (505) 388-3879
Email: kaktus@zianet.com
Web: www.zianet.com/rickstan

Spring Valley School
2109 Nebraska Avenue
Palm Harbor, Florida 34683
Phone: (727) 781-1234
Fax: (727) 576-6321
Email: Learn_free@hotmail.com

Sudbury Maui
4150 Hana Highway
Haiku, Hawaii 96708
Phone: (808) 572-3747
Email: info@sudburymaui.org
Web: www.sudburymaui.org

Sudbury Valley School
2 Winch Street
Framingham, MA 01701
Phone: (508) 877-3030
Fax: (508) 788-0674
Email: sudval@aol.com
Web: www.sudval.org

Sudbury Model Start-up Groups

Berlin Start-up Group
Martin Wilke
Storkower Strasse 78
10409 Berlin Germany
Phone: +49 30 42802302
Email: demokratische-schule@gmx.net
Web: www.demokratische-schule.de

The Chicago Group
c/o Kirsten Holmquist-Sutherland
5143 S. Greenwood Ave. #3
Chicago, Illinois, 60615
Phone: (773) 493-2409
Email: k-sutherland-4@alumni.uchicago.edu
Web: www.sudburiyetwork.org/chicagogroup.htm

The Finnish Start-up Group
Marko Koskinen
Kyäljoentie 434
01900 Nurmijärvi Finland
Phone +358-50-3319358 (mobile)
Email: marko@vapaus.net
Web: http://www.vapaus.net

Houston Sudbury School Group
Phone: (281) 856-9913
Fax: (281) 856-9919
Email: lgabel@swbell.net
Web: www.houstonsudbury.org

Indigo Sudbury Campus
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada
Email: sendlove@telusplanet.net

Mountain Laurel Sudbury School
Founders Group
P.O. Box 2332
Manchester, CT 06045-2332
Phone: (860) 649-7376
E-mail: info@mountainlaurelsudbury.org
Web: www.mountainlaurelsudbury.org

Nova Scotia Sudbury Start-up
c/o Greenbergs
RR1 Port Williams Nova Scotia
BOP 1T0 Canada
Phone: (902) 542 4655
Fax: available upon request
Email: davidg@glinx.com

Prairie Sage Sudbury School
Founders Group
P.O. Box 4185
Joliet, Illinois 60434-4185
Phone: (815) 730-0030
Email: melissa@prairiesage.org
Web: www.prairiesage.org

Sudbury by the Sea
Malibu, California
Phone: (310) 455-9799
Fax: (310) 455-9353
Email: SudburyLA@aol.com

Sudbury Liberty School
Start-up Group
c/o Cindy Komarechka
100 Pine Street
Garson, Ontario
Canada P3L 1A2
Phone: (705) 693-3546
Email: cindyk@unitz.on.ca

**Other schools valuing democracy, individual choice,
and personal responsibility**

Banyan Tree UnSchool
130 Centre Street
London, Ontario
Canada N6J 1T5
Phone: (519) 433-3756
Fax: (519) 434-7030
Email: unschool@banyantree.lweb.net
Web: learnfree.ca

Democratic School of Hadera
Brandies Forest P.O. Box 335
Hadera Israel
Phone: 972-(0)6-6225261
Fax: 972-(0)6-6344146
Email: Maralist@ort.org.il
Web: www.geocities.com/Athens/Sparta/6892

The Highland School
Rt. 83, Box 56
Highland, WV 26346
Phone: (304) 869-3250
Fax: (304) 869-3253
Email: highland@ruralnet.org
Web: www.ruralnet.org/highlandschool

The Living School
P.O. Box 6105
Boulder, CO 80306
Phone: (303) 449-0866
Fax: (303) 447-1511
Email: LivingSchool@aol.com
Web: www.livingschool.org

The New School
812 Elkton Road
P.O. Box 947
Newark, DE 19715-0947
Phone: (302) 456-9838
Fax: (302) 456-0921
Email: info@thenewschool.com
Web: www.thenewschool.com

Puget Sound Community School
1310 N. 45th Street
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: (206) 524-0916
Fax: (206) 524-2888
Email: pscs@pscsc.org
Web: www.pscsc.org

Sands School
48 East Street
Ashburton, Devon
TQ13 7AX United Kingdom
Phone:(01364) 653666
Fax:(01364) 653666
Email: Enquiry@sandsschool.demon.co.uk
Web: www.sandsschool.demon.co.uk

Summerhill
Leiston, Suffolk
IP16 4HY United Kingdom
Phone: +44 (0)1728 830 540
Fax: +44 (0)1728 830 540
Email: office@summerhillschool.co.uk
Web: www.s-hill.demon.co.uk

Tamariki School
86 St. John Street
Woolston, Christchurch New Zealand
Phone: 011 64 338 49014
Fax: 011 64 338 49029
Email: tamariki@clear.net.nz

The Tutorial School
400 Brunn Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 988-1859
Fax: available upon request
Email: tutorial@prodigy.net
Web: pages.prodigy.net/tutorial

Windsor House School
440 Hendry Avenue
North Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7L 4C5
Phone: (604) 903-3366
Fax: (604) 903-3367
Email: hhughes@idmail.com
Web: whs.at.org

Other Resources and Networks

The Alternative Education Resource
Organization (AERO)
417 Roslyn Road
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
Phone: 1-800-769-4171 or 516-621-2195
Fax: 516-625-3257
Email: info@educationrevolution.org
Web: www.educationrevolution.org

WREN
Worldwide Real Education Network
c/o David and Lynette Gribble
4 Dene Cottages
South Brent, Devon TQ10 9JE
United Kingdom
Phone: 44 (0) 1364 72558
Fax: 44 (0) 1364 72803
Email: davidgribble@onetel.net.uk
Web: reaeducation.homestead.com

SERN strives to maintain an accurate and comprehensive list of Sudbury model schools and start-up groups. Additionally, we list schools which do not call themselves Sudbury model schools, yet have elements in common with the Sudbury model. We also list educational organizations which support the ideas behind the Sudbury model. Each listing is with permission, and all information contained in the listing is supplied by the school, group or organization. Schools are listed in the category of their choice.
Please send updates and requests for additions to: info@sudbournetwork.org.

If you'd like to participate in an on-line e-mail discussion of the Sudbury model, you can join the discuss-sudbury-model listserv. This is a private listserv, run by Scott Gray, and is not maintained or endorsed by the Sudbury Valley School.

To join, send an e-mail (from the e-mail address which you wish to use for this listserv) to: majordomo@sudval.org. In the body of the message, type: subscribe discuss-sudbury-model. Once you have joined, you may contribute to the discussion by sending e-mail to discuss-sudbury-model@sudval.org.

It's a good idea to identify yourself in the opening of your message. Keep an eye on the subject line as well. Complete information, including links to archives of past discussions, is available at: <http://www.sudval.org/links.html>.
