



# Open Fields News

Open Fields School Newsletter • Fall 2009

## ***Madcap Monster Inn*** **Premiers at Open Fields** By Katrin Tchana



Sam, Hyla, Maren, Eli, Claire, Greg,  
Kayla, Sylas, Daniel, Trillium

On October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> the Open Fields community was treated to a performance of Frank V. Priore's classic play, *Madcap Monster Inn*. Set in the main lobby of the Hotel Transylvania, this brief but pithy drama follows the adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Gardner (ably played by Eli Carini and Maren Vogel), an aristocratic couple whose car has broken down outside the hotel on a dark and stormy night. When Mrs. Gardner becomes increasingly distressed by the unconventional guests at the Hotel Transylvania, the suspense mounts: Will the unlucky duo actually check in to the Madcap Monster Inn, or do they need to find another place to stay?

Hyla Maddelana gave a memorable performance as the hotel manager. Also notable

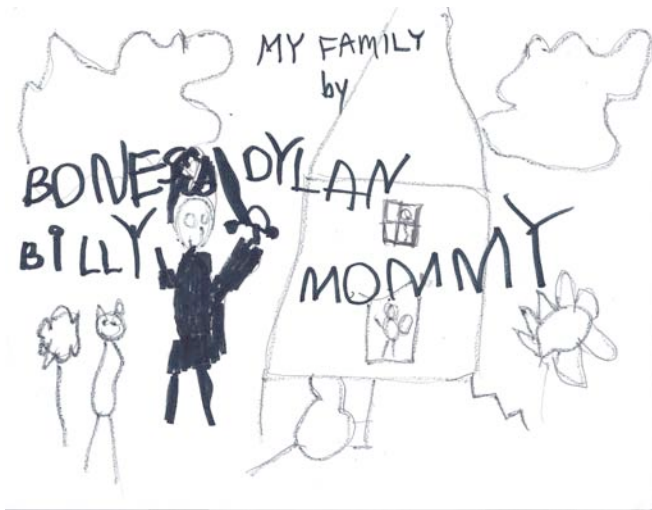
were cameo appearances by Daniel Goldberg as Count Dracula, Kayla Loiacono as a highly irritating child, Claire McPhetres as a bellboy, and Trillium Fitzgerald Cserr as a witch. Sam Shain, Silas Hermens and Gregory Woodsum did a fabulous job as stagehands, and numerous scene changes went off without a hitch. The cast performed brilliantly under the capable direction of Jean K. Aull, who we remember from past Open Fields' dramatic tour de forces such as *Have Floss, Will Travel* and *The Perils of Polly Pureheart*. *Madcap Monster Inn* provided the loyal fans of Open Fields' School Theatre Program with at least seven minutes of pure pleasure, and will go down in history as another smashing OFS success.

## **OFS is on Facebook!** By Mary Layton

For as long as the school has been open, now for thirty nine years, our director, Jean Aull has created stunning photographic portraits of the students. In the early days of the school Jean worked in black and white and developed film and printed pictures in a darkroom on the second floor. She was good friends at this time with Ralph Steiner, a Thetford Hill resident and nationally known photographer. These days Jean works in color with a digital camera and her images are used for the OFS calendar and the school website. Recently our Board Chair, Nellie Pennington posted copies of early black and white portraits on the OFS Face Book page. This has created a happy buzz among OFS alumni. Visitors to the school may view this year's gallery of student portraits and a special portrait of

school mascot: Woody. To find OFS on Facebook, visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search both "Open Fields Alumni" and "Open Fields School."

## **My Family** By Dylan



## **Praying Mantis Encounter** By Mary Layton

In the fall season at Open Fields School I like to lead focused Nature Walks. I have devised a way to encourage the students to closely observe their natural surroundings. Each student is given a loop of string, a pencil, and a clipboard with a piece of blank paper. We walk to a given location, often the Sledding Hill. The students are asked to find a spot of their choosing, lay the string on the ground, and to observe and draw what they see. This often results in discoveries about insects. Each year for the past decade the students have found at least one praying mantis at the Sledding Hill. When this happens the strings and clipboards are forgotten in the ensuing excitement.

This year on my third nature walk of the day at the Sledding Hill, a student started yelling that he had found a praying mantis. When I walked over to investigate with the remaining students we suddenly started finding many more of these fascinating insects, for a total of nine. One flew away. The students brought the remaining eight to me and I balanced them on a handful of grass and a polar fleece. It was so special to have

eight in hand that I decided we would bring them back to show to the other students. It was tough to keep the mantises from crawling up my arm and around to my back. Fortunately, one of the students proved to be an able mantis wrangler who would grab them as needed and move them back around to the front. At school there was a brief hiatus to allow the other classes to conclude. The remaining students then gathered around to view the insects. There was great excitement as "Brownie" ate the head off of one of the green mantises. The students declared that "Brownie" was a bad mantis that needed a "Time Out". Despite this foray into anthropomorphism it can be fairly said that in terms of engagement, the encounter with the mantises was a complete success. Karen captured the experience on DVD so we can share the experience.

After everyone had a chance to view the mantises, a group of eight students volunteered to help release them at the Sledding Hill. As the insects were released one by one into the wild we all felt a great deal of satisfaction about this natural encounter.

## **Time to Get Your Holiday Cards!**

Packages of beautiful cards are now available.



Choose from two different sets of cards made by Trina Schart Hyman (6 cards for \$10) and Egg Auction cards (3 for \$5). Cards are available at the school.

## **Ink Cartridge and Cell Phone Recycling**

We earn a little extra money for the school by recycling ink cartridges and cell phones. Contact Karen Kreis (open.fields.school@valley.net or 802-785-2077) for information about dropping them at the school. Thanks!

## **Save The Date For The Great Goose Egg Auction! May 8, 2010**

Every two years, Open Fields School auctions off approximately 100 intricately decorated goose, ostrich, and duck eggs. This is one of the school's most exciting events, bringing together the creative skills of artists from all over the world and the hard work of many volunteers and sponsors to provide an exciting day of bidding. There are many ways you can help! Please contact Karen Kreis (open.fields.school@valley.net or 802-785-2077) for information. To browse beautiful eggs from past auctions, visit [www.openfields.org/egg\\_auction.html](http://www.openfields.org/egg_auction.html)



**“Monsters Night and Day”  
by Rebecca Thornburgh**

## **Alumni News**

Alumni, we want to hear from you! If you have moved, started college, begun a new job, or just have something fun to share, please contact us. We'd love to share your news in the Open Fields Newsletter! Send Alumni News to: Peter Carini (peter.carini@dartmouth.edu) or Jo Knowles (jo@joknowles.com) Subject line: OFS Alum.

### **Open Fields School**

Thetford Hill, Vermont 05074  
802-785-2077

Open Fields is a non-profit, private elementary school founded in 1971

#### **Director and Founder**

Jean K. Aull

#### **Board of Directors**

Jean Aull, Ruth Cserr, Terry Garrison, Karen Kreis, Mary Layton, Meg McLean, Peg Little, Nellie Pennington

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#### **Staff**

Jean Aull, Mary Layton, Karen Kreis

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**Thetford Hill, VT 05074**

**802-785-2077**

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Yes, I want to support Open Fields School!

Enclosed is my donation of \_\_\_\_\_ on behalf of quality education.

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Please make your check payable to Open Fields School. Mail c/o OFS, Thetford, Vermont 05074.

Open Fields is a private, non-profit, alternative elementary school and all contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!

On occasion, a supporter of Open Fields School will ask about the procedure for making a charitable bequest to the school; that is, how to leave money or property to the school in their will. The procedure is simple, and your attorney can help you draft a new will or add the necessary codicil, or amendment, to your existing will. Such gifts are fully deductible for federal estate tax purposes. They are a very personal way to support Open Fields School.