



Open Fields News

Open Fields School Newsletter • Winter 2011

Save The Date For The Medieval Fair!

May 28, 2010, 10:00am-4:00pm

Open Fields School presents a Medieval Fair on the Thetford Hill Green, Thetford, Vermont, proceeds to support scholarships at the school. During this family-friendly festival, the Green comes alive with the sights and sounds of a Medieval village. A King and Queen, Knights and Ladies, Peasants, Craftsmen and Farmers gather to celebrate the age via music, dance, games of skill and chance, authentic food, parades, VINS falconry, storytelling by Simon Brooks, Benny the Dragon, and feats of juggling and acrobatics. United States currency is exchanged for Magic Beans, the Coin of the Realm in the Kingdom of Open Fields.

The Open Fields Medieval Fair is run on a biannual basis by members of the school community with the support of local organizations such as the Parish Players, Revels North, VINS, and Simon Brooks, Storyteller. The intent of the Fair is to engage young children and their families in a theatrical experience that brings a far away time to life in an enjoyable and holistic way. The event takes place on a classic New England Green. Members of the Open Fields Community dress in Medieval costumes and run the booths and activities, which are supplemented by special appearances from professionals. Admission is \$5 per person or \$20 per family (children under 5 free). Please help spread the word about this wonderful event!



"Balloons" 1984-85, OFS Archives

Rauner Special Collections Field Trip

By Erica Layton

It was great for me, as an Open Fields School alumna, to join the OFS sixth graders and teacher Karen Kreis on a field trip recently to the Rauner Library at Dartmouth College. I enjoyed hearing the kids' questions and responses to the materials we got to see. What a lively bunch! Over the course of the visit they asked some poignant questions such as: What materials allow you to have a large number of pages in a book? Why is that man wearing a dress? (It's a tunic!!) And: What's with the flying wood in the background?!? (When that was drawn, perspective had not yet been invented!) Being around OFS students is great. It makes me nostalgic about my own time there. They are an invariably creative group of kids, always questioning, inventing, exploring and most importantly, interested in things. It's great that they had the opportunity to take that

field trip to Rauner, and I hope it inspires them, as is often the way with Open Fields students, to create books and manuscripts of their own invention.

Here are the details of what we experienced: We walked into a small room within Dartmouth's Rauner Library and seated ourselves around a long table. Our host, Peter Carini (Eli's Dad!) works with the special collections in his position as Dartmouth College Archivist. On the table before us were a number of ancient tomes spread out on cushioned holders, their contents revealed.

Mr. Carini began by showing us a scroll and passing around a replica of a wax writing tablet, complete with a stylus and housed in a small wooden folio. At this point Eli pointed out that a 600-page book made in such a manner would be unwieldy! Quite right. We then were introduced to the invention (this was well before there was paper) of velum. Velum is made from thin sheets of goat hide. If you look closely enough at the pages of a book made with velum, you can see all of the tiny hair follicles! We all leaned forward to look at the 800-year-old tome set before us on a soft stand. Sure enough: there were the hair follicles--and some lovely calligraphy as well. Mr. Carini told us that velum can be scraped off and reused many times, as the paint or ink never really soaks in. It is also incredibly durable: we all got to (carefully) touch the page!

Another book we took a close look at was a "Book of Hours," which is a type of early European prayer book with many pictures. The pictures were designed to be "read" even by people who could not read the written parts of the book. We took a look at one under a video-magnifier (the book itself was tiny!). Said Carini: "Tell me what you see." "A dog eating a donut!" "A man wearing a dress!" came back the chorus of answers. Needless to say, fashions have changed over the last several centuries. We were looking at a picture of a saint walking along a road, a dog at his side and behind him a walled city. The colors of his clothing were not necessarily what they would have been in reality at that time though, because the pigments available to make paint and ink were much more rich and varied than were the available dyes for fabric.

Note: Erica Layton graduated from OFS in 1998. She went on to the Richmond Middle School and Hanover High School, attended Earlham College for a semester, and then went on to graduate from the Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in Sculpture. She works

at the Upper Valley Events Center in Norwich and in her spare time creates needle lace out of human hair.

Coming Up: OFS Turns 40!

The 40th Reunion Celebration on May 29, 2011 is being organized by alumni Erica Layton and Chico Eastridge. They hope to host a lively party and plan to make full use of social networking via the OFS Facebook page to reach alumni far and wide. As they both are adept at filmmaking, the event is likely to be recorded. Please check the OFS website and Facebook page for more details.

Note: Special thanks to Nellie Pennington for providing the wonderful photos from the archives for this issue of the Newsletter!



"Reunion," 1991, OFS Archives

Fall Auction a Big Success!

Thanks to everyone who was involved with our Fall Auction. It was very well attended, had a diverse and inviting number of items, and raised \$4500 for the school.

Mini Me/Micro Me/Macro Me By Mary Layton

Our math class recently took a break from the Singapore Math Program to do a scaling project, called Mini Me/Micro Me/Macro Me. The first scaling adventure was for each student to take their height and proportions in inches and scale it to 1/10 of their size. This "Mini Me" fit nicely on a normal 8X11 inch paper. Next to it was "Micro Me" at 100x smaller, a couple of inches tall. The students had to take measurements and divide the inches while practicing what to do with the decimal point, make estimates to relate standard measurement with decimals, and draw their

proportional self portraits. The first iterations were such a hit that they also created Macro Me. This figure was ten times larger than normal and was drawn next to a scaled sketch of OFS. The school building is 30' high and Macro Me looms over it at an average of 50'. The final experiments were with Centi Me, 100x larger and as tall as a 47 story skyscraper, and Micro Me, 1000 times smaller and 1/10 the size of a grain of sand."



"Pyramid," 1980-81, OFS Archives

Visit the OFS Blog!

Mary Layton has started a blog to share the unique learning experiences at Open Fields. Visit openfieldsschool.wordpress.com to find out what students at OFS have been up to!

Ink Cartridge & 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!

Don't Forget to "Friend" OFS!

Reminder: Open Fields School is now on Facebook! To find us, visit www.facebook.com and search both "Open Fields Alumni" and "Open Fields School."

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

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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.