

# Focus on...

## *Friends of Woodstock School, Inc.*

*an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supporting the educational mission and purposes of* **WOODSTOCK SCHOOL**

An Occasional Newsletter

Issue No. 9 October 2014

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### Woodstock in the Community



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2015 FWS Annual  
Meeting and Reunion

## Woodstock Shapes Its Graduates' Futures

by Dr. Eleanor Nicholson  
President, Woodstock School Board of Directors

As with graduations everywhere, Woodstock graduations are beautiful, poignant, happy, and sad. The images remain long after the ceremonies are over - the bell shapes of the stunning Korean dresses and the amazing headdresses of the students from the Northeast; the girls in their saris, the boys dignified in their Nehru jackets; the girls teetering on spike heels as they navigate the treacheries of Woodstock stairs; the families beaming with pride as photos flash; the music of student names and home countries as graduates come forward to receive their diplomas; the slow exodus down the ramp, with hugs and best wishes for every graduate. Unforgettable.

To reach this high point, the school juggles competing needs and resolves dilemmas - how to persuade seniors that the school year is not over just because they have taken their exams, how to prepare them for life beyond Woodstock while their future is an abstraction to them, how to avoid an overload of events - concerts, teas, dinners - while still providing a warm and memorable occasion, how to look backward and forward simultaneously.

Most of those now-graduated young persons have arrived at the college or university that has seen their worth and admitted them. They are digging into their new world with gusto, interest, excitement and, surely, some anxiety and uncertainty. They think they have left Woodstock behind. But we know, and they will grow to know, that one never leaves Woodstock.



**Mansi Kedia received her diploma from Dr. Eleanor Nicholson at Woodstock's graduation on June 7, 2014.**

Woodstock will shape what they choose to do and how and why they do it. Woodstock remains forever in the minds, hearts, and souls of those who have experienced its power and magic.

## Vermont Fundraising Buys Water Pipes

by Elizabeth Khosravi '16

I came to Woodstock in the fall of 2013 right after an enormous monsoon flooding in surrounding villages. It got my attention because I have always been passionate about helping others, especially those who are less fortunate than I. I talked to Mrs. Mark, director of community service programs at Woodstock, and she mentioned that the school had adopted a village, Dunda, which is only 1 ½ hours away. I was supposed to come to Woodstock for one semester, but soon I realized that I had an opportunity to help people in desperate need. I convinced my parents that there was a reason for me to come back for the second semester.

**Raised \$1000** - During winter break, I went home to Vermont and started a project, Two Worlds Coming Together. I spoke at several area venues, the Rotary Club, and schools and had an interview with two local newspapers. I also organized a bake sale during a hockey championship game in my hometown of South Burlington. Even though Vermont is a small state, the people are interested in issues around the world. The community was very supportive in spreading the word about my project in India. During six weeks, I collected about \$1000.

**Provided water pipes** - When I returned to Mussoorie, I visited the village to decide how I could help with the donations I collected. I decided to support a woman who was struggling to keep her newly built fields because her husband had left her, and she did not have any support in the village. I bought pipes for her fields (the old ones were washed away during the monsoon), so she does not need to water fields manually. I also provided pipes for a man in the village.



**Elizabeth is a SAGE student at Woodstock. She is the daughter of Koorash '79 and Katrina Khosravi.**

I have learned and experienced many things that I wouldn't back home, and I'm grateful for everything that has happened.

(Contact: schoolball12@gmail.com)

## Contribute Labeled and Identified Memorabilia to School's Archives

by Margo Warner Curl '67



**Cate Whitcomb '66, Margo Curl '67, and Archivist Lori Osborne, Evanston, IL catalog documents for the school's**

arranged by Margo Warner Curl '67 in 1997. Between 1997 and 2014, Margo coordinated a team who together brought order and access to the collection. The team included '66 and '67 alumni, Lauranne Barnard Cebulak, Max Marble, Sue Scott Swanson, and Cate Whitcomb and her archivist friend, Lori Osborne. Max, Cate, and Margo will return to continue the work as there is still much to be done.

(Contact: mcurl@wooster.edu)

The Woodstock School archives were created to gather and preserve materials relevant to the history of its immediate political, social, and physical environment. They are housed in a secure room above the Quad, funded by the class of 1942.

The archival materials document the history of the school, the religious and international communities from which it developed, and its unique geographic setting. The material is valuable to outreach functions of the school and to historians of colonial and post-colonial women's lives, Protestant missionary activity, and descriptions of environmental systems over time.

A printed finding aid is available in the archives to guide users to material accessioned to date under the following categories: Administration, Alumni, Development, Hillside/Community, History, Maps, Parents, Photographs, Publications, and Students.

**An alumni coordinated effort** - The original collection of records, photographs, and memorabilia were sorted and

*Editor's note:* Are you an archivist for your college, school, church, community, or organization? If so, please contact Marianna McJimsey '54, RMcJimsey@comcast.net



## Author Omair Ahmad '93 Finds Alumni in Bhutan

by Marianna Presler McJimsey '54

We continue our series featuring Woodstock authors by noting a non-fiction work, *The Kingdom at the Centre of the World: Journeys into Bhutan* (Aleph Books: 2013, 230 pp.) by novelist Omair Ahmad '93.



His novel, *Jimmy the Terrorist*, was shortlisted for the 2009 Man Asian Literary Prize and won the 2010 Vodafone Crossword Book Award which recognizes the best of Indian writing. During his research for the Bhutan book, Ahmad "was amused to find a number of WS alums there who I had never associated with Bhutan during my schooldays. So a strong WS connection."

Ahmad writes, "The Kingdom of Bhutan is often portrayed as isolated and untouched by the greater world, but the opposite is true. Bhutan has been shaped by most of the world's great events, from the Tibetan warrior state and its conquest of key Silk Route areas and the spread of Himalayan Buddhism, to British imperialism and the opium wars. Bhutan's 15<sup>th</sup> century suspension bridges inspired European travelers two centuries later. Now, as the rise of India and China reshapes the world order, Bhutan, located in the middle of the largest unresolved land dispute on earth, is again at the center of history. *The Kingdom at the Centre of the World: Journeys into Bhutan* shows the intersection of this small mountain country with world political trends. Bhutan continues to be relevant today despite its tiny size and population." (Contact: Omair.ahmad@gmail.com)

## Visit Woodstock's New and Compelling Website

[www.woodstockschool.in](http://www.woodstockschool.in)

Did you know that Sir George Everest, Surveyor General of India, 1830-1843, for whom Mt. Everest is named, had a house in Mussoorie? The video, "A History of Mussoorie, India from Woodstock School Grade 4 Class" includes this vignette along with fascinating narratives and archival photographs. Log on the school's new website and enjoy Mussoorie's local history as researched by the students.

You can then access the YouTube video, "2020 Vision" during which Principal Dr. Jonathan Long describes the four-pronged emphasis on the performing arts, the center for imagination, scholarships for diversity, and community outreach. In another video, Dr. Long narrates his story, "Harry the Giant Jalebi."

Among the many videos ready for viewing are "Himalayan Education at Woodstock School," "Welcome to Woodstock," and "Making a Difference." The website and other improved communication initiatives have been made possible by the generous gift of Rick Downs '79 and the Downs Foundation.

The website is a treasure of information about our alma mater, and we invite you to log on at [www.woodstockschool.in](http://www.woodstockschool.in).

## Introducing Marlin Schoonmaker '67

by Marianna Presler McJimsey '54

Marlin Schoonmaker's family ties to Woodstock School are legendary. His father, Joseph Schoonmaker, attended Woodstock in 1933-1934. Eight cousins, from missionary families in North India, were members of classes between 1959 and 1972 as were Marlin's brothers, David '62 and Victor '71. In honor of their father, David and Marlin created the Joseph Schoonmaker Scholarship Fund currently providing two scholarships a year. The funds make it possible for children of doctors and hospital administrators in Christian legacy hospitals in rural India to attend Woodstock.

Marlin is the president of the board of Friends of Woodstock School. His leadership is especially appropriate for he is an avid and articulate proponent of a Woodstock education. After eleven years as a student at Woodstock, Marlin recalls sitting in the triangle area east of the high school and realizing that "one could make your own reality by persistence and effort. 'Palma Non Sine Pulvere' [our school motto – No palms of victory without the dust of a struggle] came alive."



### A voice that could fill Parker Hall

Marlin signed up for Joan Brown's Oral Expression class, a risky step for he had a slight stutter. To his surprise, Mrs. Brown assigned him the lead in a play, *Meet the Body*. And when he went on stage, he found that his "speech was smooth and that I had a voice that could fill Parker Hall." This transforming event taught him something about taking risks when assigning work scope to others.

Boys at the Hostel played *gulli danda*, a sport over 2500 years old and believed to be the origin of cricket; they also enjoyed *kabaddi*, an ancient form of wrestling. Although Marlin lettered in four sports, his all-time favorite activity was going on long weekend hikes with several buddies, all on their own.

Hiking in the Tehri foothills figured in Marlin's college selection of Seattle Pacific University and the completion of his B.A. at the University of Washington for Seattle boasted of mountains nearby as well as a monsoon. Every summer during his college years, he shipped out as a merchant seaman.

**Maritime industry career** - After a career as a potter in Seattle, Marlin received an M.B.A. from the University of Washington and focused on the maritime and port industry. He has worked for 24 years for Foss Maritime, a shipping company founded in 1889. Initially he was hired to deal with the overflow of commercial documentation needed for the Exxon Valdez spill and clean-up efforts.

Marlin and his wife Jeannie live in Seattle where they enjoy weekly weekend dinners for all family members in the area, including their three grandchildren. He appreciates "these treasured times."

(Contact: [schoonmarlin@mac.com](mailto:schoonmarlin@mac.com))

## Woodstock & Minnesota: The Headwaters

**2015 FWS Annual Meeting & Reunion – July 10 -13**  
**University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN**

by Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi '87  
2015 Annual Meeting Committee Chair

Drawing inspiration from the source of the beautiful and mighty Mississippi River, the upcoming annual gathering will focus on the “confluence” – the coming together – of many people, ideas, and experiences that shape our Woodstock community today. The 12-member reunion planning committee especially welcomes the classes of '60, '67, and '87, who will host their 55<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> class celebrations, respectively. For many years, St. Olaf College, in nearby Northfield, MN, has sent students to Woodstock to complete their student teaching, and we look forward to visiting with the former student teachers.

**Tea tasting** - Our growing list of presenters includes keynote speaker Andy Matheson (Staff 1979-1992) who will address human trafficking and his work with OASIS (See [www.oasisglobal.org](http://www.oasisglobal.org)). Sudhir Prakash '67 and Shalini Agarwal '71 of the Glenburn Estates in



Darjeeling will describe their family's quest for producing quality teas and offer tea tastings. Acclaimed author Merryn Glover '87 will introduce her book, *A House Called Askival*, to be published in the U.S. and Canada in November. Sanjaya Mark, director of Woodstock's community service programs, will highlight the exciting collaborative development project between the school and the villages of Dunda and Nikurchi after last year's devastating floods. And Christabel Corazza '87 will give a stunning vocal performance.

We will offer an optional Twin City Tour for spouses Saturday morning, as well as a Mississippi River Cruise Sunday afternoon. The FWS Alumni Enrichment Boundary Water Canoe Trip, a five-day/ four-night excursion to northern Minnesota, will depart Monday, July 13 from the University of St. Thomas. All skill-levels are welcome, but you must be able to carry the canoe and supplies between lakes. Space is limited, so sign up early.

If you register for the annual meeting before November 30, 2014, you will receive a 20% discount off the two- or three-night package. (Contact: [Ldomansheydayi@gmail.com](mailto:Ldomansheydayi@gmail.com))

**World Wide Woodstock Day - October 18, 2014**  
**Alumni and friends gather annually on World Wide Woodstock Day to enjoy the Woodstock spirit. To find an event near you, [click here](#) for a list of Woodstock Regional Clubs and coordinators in North America. Or contact Li Chu ([lichucalif@att.net](mailto:lichucalif@att.net)) for a list of alumni in your area.**

## Did You Know?

- ❖ That FWS made grants to Woodstock School in fiscal year June 2013-July 2014 which **TOTALED \$253,919?**
- ❖ That these grants **SUPPORTED** scholarships and programs for students, staff development, and facilities improvement?
- ❖ That support for these grants come from alumni and friends like **YOU?**
- ❖ That it is **EASY** to give as a sustaining donor and ask FWS to withdraw a certain amount each month from your bank account or credit card?
- ❖ That it **DOES NOT MATTER HOW MUCH** you give but that you give?
- ❖ That you can **GIVE RIGHT NOW** by [clicking here](#) and donating on line?
- ❖ That the **STAFF AND STUDENTS** at Woodstock are fully aware of and **APPRECIATE** the support that comes from alumni and friends like you?

## FWS Board of Directors

Marlin Schoonmaker '67 - President  
Woodrow Turner '61 - Vice-President  
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