

Focus on...

Friends of Woodstock School, Inc.

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

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 5 April 2013

What, Who, Why & Whither?

Learn more about Friends of Woodstock School



The Pedagogy of Place

Does a Himalayan setting affect education?



Stand Up For Woodstock

New programs in North America for Woodstock alumni and friends



FWS 2013 Annual Meeting

Will be held at Maryville College, Tennessee on July 5-8, 2013

What, Who, Why & Whither of Friends of Woodstock School

by Jane Cummings, Executive Director

As I travel around North America and meet with Woodstock alumni and friends, I am often asked, *“Well, what is this Friends of Woodstock School organization anyway?”* Just as a Woodstock education is a unique and wonderful experience, so too is an organization of alumni and friends in North America different from a typical alumni/development organization.

What - Friends of Woodstock School is a 501(c)(3) US tax-exempt organization which is structured to support foreign educational institutions. To retain that status, Friends of Woodstock must adhere to strict compliance regulations. These include policies that indicate FWS has complete independence in raising, managing, and disbursing its funds. In fulfilling its mission *“To support the educational mission and purposes of Woodstock School,”* FWS over the past 10 years, has made grants of over \$8 million for facilities, scholarships, and other educational programs at Woodstock.

Who - The affairs of our Friends organization are directed and managed by a Board of Directors of nine members (listed on p. 4) chosen for their expertise and experience. Three committees (Alumni, Finance, and Fundraising) and a staff of two further implement and support the programs, activities, fundraising, and financial management of FWS.

Why - Did you know that 62% of the 5000+ known Woodstock alumni worldwide live in the US and Canada? And that 70% of current Woodstock students plan to attend colleges in North America? No matter where they live, an objective of “2020 Vision” is to expand the pool of alumni who are engaged with the school. To achieve this, Principal Jonathan Long encourages building strong, independent Woodstock Friends organizations around the world. The FWS Board of Directors has accepted this challenge. At a meeting in Chicago in January, the Board took steps to nurture and strengthen alumni relations and development programs in North America that are independent, active, and focused. You will hear more about this as we develop regional clubs, professional networking opportunities, and fundraising events in the US and Canada.

Whither - Our goal is to build FWS into an organization that serves our Woodstock alumni community in North America and supports our interest in helping the school achieve excellence in education and access to it for a diverse student and staff community. We cannot do it without the help of all of you. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal!

The Pedagogy of Place

by Dr. Jonathan C. Long, Principal

The word pedagogy comes from the Greek and literally means "to lead the child." Today, the word is used to refer to the method and practice of teaching. When I use the phrase "pedagogy of place," I am pointing to the way in which the spaces we inhabit influence the development and education of young people.

The relationship between education and the environment is a fascinating one. An education which takes place in an urban setting is surely qualitatively different to that which takes place amidst the beauty and splendor of nature. Plato's take on this was clear, *"Our youth should dwell in the land of health amid fair sights and sounds; and beauty will meet the sense like a breeze and insensibly draw the soul even in childhood into harmony with the beauty of reason."*

Who can doubt that an education which takes place amidst the stunning vistas of the Himalayas is qualitatively different from that which takes place amidst the hubbub of traffic and high rise buildings. Writer, adventurer, and Cambridge University academic Robert Macfarlane puts it thus:

"Mountains seem to answer an increasing imaginative need in the West. More and more people are discovering a desire for them, and a powerful solace in them. At bottom, mountains, like all wildernesses, challenge our complacent conviction - so easy to lapse into - that the world has been made for humans by humans. By speaking of greater forces than we can possibly invoke, and by confronting us with greater spans of time than we can possibly envisage, mountains refute our excessive trust in the man-made." (Mountains of the Mind: Adventures in Reaching the Summit)

I wish to suggest that the influence of the environment on education extends beyond the natural setting to include all aspects of the physical space within which it occurs – from the aesthetics of buildings and spaces to the quality of light and color in a room. All of these factors play a role in shaping the "space" within which education takes place and form part of what the architectural philosopher, Christopher Alexander, has called the "architecture of the invisible."

It is widely acknowledged today that the factors which account for a child's development go far deeper and are far more complex than any purely rational model suggests. All that has emerged from new approaches to learning that draw upon insights into the human brain, the functioning of human societies, and learning as a community-wide activity remind us of the need to emphasize the affective dimension, the social context, and the complex psychological processes which shape and direct the development of young people.

Such an approach means examining some of the most basic assumptions about the kind of environment we are creating. For example, we must be willing to consider the messages being delivered to young people in every facet of a school's life from the decor of the classrooms to the organization of the school day, from the role model of staff to the management structures within the school.

To take seriously the way in which our "place" educates us, I suggest we need to do the following:

1. We need to take careful account of the environment within which a Woodstock education occurs. Simply living and working in this mountain environment is a vital part of what Woodstock offers as education. Although these lessons may never be examined or graded, they are nevertheless profound and formative. The "place" in which we are educated is not only the natural space of the physical environment – it is also the social space of the community. No school can take the personal and social development of its members seriously unless it places value upon sound relationships and effective pastoral care.
2. Our values need to be institutionalized and become part of everyday life. In other words, young people need to experience them as taken for granted in action - not simply in theory or precept.
3. Our approach must provide opportunities for young people to reflect upon good examples of the values, skills, and attitudes which we wish to foster. Clearly this places the burden of responsibility upon the teacher and all the staff within the school. This means providing appropriate role models and ensuring that staff behavior reflects the values and attitudes that we expect of our students.

This thinking raises several questions in my mind:

- How can we use our "Himalayan Roots" (as our mission statement puts it) and our location in mountains to have a more meaningful impact on our students?
- In what ways is our education qualitatively different because it is an education which takes place in a mountain environment (rather than a city environment, for example)?
- How do the "lessons" of these mountains reach into the hearts of our students as they engage with 21st century issues in the Woodstock classroom?
- Can we encourage our students to "lift their eyes to the hills" and to appreciate the lessons they have to offer?

Part of the answers to these big questions lies in our evolving 2020 Vision. The answers will also, surely, lie in our unfolding Enrichment Program and our pursuit of an education beyond the walls of the classroom.





Introducing Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi

by Marianna Presler
McJimsey '54



The power of a junior high school friendship led Alumni Committee Chair Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi '87 to Woodstock School. When her best friend, Birdie (Roberta) Matern '87, whose parents were medical missionaries in Nepal, left Boulder City NV for boarding at Woodstock, Lorrie was bereft. Her parents encouraged her successful application to enter Woodstock her sophomore year where she joined Birdie and "fell in love with the Garhwali hills, Woodstock School, and the motley lot of classmates and faculty," who became her extended family.

Lorrie's enthusiastic leadership of today's Alumni Committee is mirrored in her participation in activities at Woodstock. She was on the Student Council, served as co-editor of the *Whispering Pine*, was the Marlin Girls House Captain, and was voted Miss Woodstock at the Junior-Senior Dance. Since graduation, Lorrie has been class secretary, has planned class reunions, and raised money for a Class of 1987 gift. She currently organizes the Arizona Curry Club gatherings. She "loves hanging out with Woodstock-minded people across the generations."

Three months after Lorrie arrived in India in 1984, she and the cast of the Activity Week musical *Godspell* were ready to perform in Delhi. She was staying with 1987 classmate Sindhu Venketanarayanan's family. But the opening night was sadly cancelled because of the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguard. During the ensuing civil unrest, everybody stayed indoors except for emerging on the house rooftop to witness the crowds in the streets. On TV, they watched Indira's son, Rajiv, light her funeral pyre. After several days, the Woodstock group gathered together safely for their return bus ride to Mussoorie.

Lorrie graduated from Carleton College with a B.A. in East Asian Studies and Political Science. She has an M.A. in International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona.

And what of Birdie Matern, Lorrie's friend? Birdie is a physician, lives in the Phoenix valley near Lorrie, and delivered Lorrie's twin son and daughter ten years ago. Lorrie is already planning to send her children to Woodstock.

Stand Up For Woodstock

by Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi '87

The future of Friends of Woodstock School North America is here, now. Our school needs crucial support from alumni living in the United States and Canada to implement its far-reaching and vital "2020 Vision" strategic plan, and support is needed today.

That message was powerfully delivered at a recent meeting in Chicago of the FWS Board and Committees by Principal Jonathan Long and Executive Director Jane Cummings. After two days of heartfelt discussions, Friends of Woodstock School unanimously decided to stand up and answer the call. Do you hear that exciting pounding in the background? The beginning phase of construction on more streamlined, effective, and efficient alumni organization has already started. We are fulfilling the vision of what Friends of Woodstock School needs to become – for our school and for our alumni.

I am chair of one of three committees that were formed in Chicago. What we have known as WOSA-North America is now the Alumni Committee. The Alumni Committee encourages "friend-raising" and builds strong networks among the 2,750 alumni currently living in North America, which boasts the largest number of alums worldwide.

HOW ARE WE "FRIEND-RAISING"?

Regional Networks – We develop and support local efforts to engage alumni in geographic areas. Jane Cummings and I are reaching out to individuals to organize gatherings. We encourage these gatherings to happen two or three times a year, in addition to our annual Worldwide Woodstock Day celebration in October. Want to volunteer to lead a group? Please let us know.

Annual Meeting – Explore "Mountains, Music & Memories" at Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee on July 5-8. Get there Friday night for an amazing Appalachian Party. We will honor Phil DeVol '66 with the Distinguished Alumni Award at Saturday's Khana dinner. Principal Long and Ms. Chander, our long-serving and beloved teacher of economics and religions of India, will attend. Saturday and Sunday are filled with presentations and events, such as author Jaina Sanga '79 on her recent book, *Silk Fish Opium* and an excursion to the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center. There will also be a special meeting for class secretaries and regional leaders. If your class is interested in hosting a reunion as part of the festivities, let us know. Go to www.wosana.org to register before May 1, 2013.

NORTH AMERICAN ALUMNI SURVEY

In April, watch for an email from a survey site called SurveyMonkey. We'd appreciate it if you would fill out the brief survey. To facilitate our network and career-enhancing opportunities, we need to know where you are, how to contact you, and what you do.

OPEN POSITIONS

The Alumni Committee has a laundry list of meaningful projects, but we need help to put our dreams into action. We are especially looking for a volunteer with skills working with Digital Media, Social Media, Websites, Event Planning, and Marketing. The term of service is three years, which can be renewed once. Please submit your résumé, (as well as a letter of interest, telling us your experience and why you want to serve) to Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi at paisleys@q.com.

Fund For Excellence

Through the Fund For Excellence, Friends of Woodstock School, Inc. supports its programs and makes grants to Woodstock for projects and programs which are not met through the School's operating budget and student tuition fees and which support EXCELLENCE and ACCESS at Woodstock.

To reach our goal of raising \$130,000 by June 30, 2013, we need your support. Please click [here](#) to make your tax exempt gift to Friends of Woodstock School. Or contact David Wheeler at 425-353-8422.

Nominations for Board of Directors Friends of Woodstock School

Nominations are solicited for a July 2013 vacancy on the FWS Board of Directors. Candidates need to have appropriate experience with, training in, or knowledge of issues of governance, finance, or administration relevant to non-profit organizations; or substantive knowledge in topics of interest to the Corporation, such as education, coupled with a respect for the need of the Corporation to maintain institutional independence. Board members are expected to prepare for, attend, and actively participate in the Annual Meeting and all Board meetings; be well informed about the educational philosophy, mission, goals, major developments, and financial status of FWS and Woodstock School; actively engage in FWS regional and other events and donate and actively solicit contributions to FWS.

Nominations should be submitted in writing accompanied by a current résumé and a letter of motivation from the candidate as to their interest. Please submit to Jane Cummings at sjanecummings@gmail.com before May 15, 2013.

MOUNTAINS, MUSIC & MEMORIES

Annual Meeting of Friends of Woodstock School/
WOSA-North America
Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee USA
(close to Knoxville)
July 5-8, 2013

Highlights of the weekend:

- **Well-Travelled Alumni Series** presenting **Robert Bonham '59** and his trip to "Sacred Sites in North India"
- **Spouses' excursion** to the Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Center
- **"Mountain Music Project,"** a documentary bringing Nepalese and Appalachian folk musicians together
- **Friday night BBQ Party** with a humorous mountain storyteller and local Tennessee band
- **All-day presentations and workshops** on Saturday and Sunday.

More program details can be found at www.wosana.org
Registration will close on WEDNESDAY, MAY 1.

[Click here to REGISTER NOW!](#)

For a registration form by mail, please call David Wheeler at 425-353-8422.

FWS Board of Directors

Woodrow Turner '61 - President
Marlin Schoonmaker '67 - Vice President
David Schoonmaker '62 - Secretary
Bruce Davis '73 - Treasurer
Pritam Advani '76
Catherine Allegra - Parent
Anne Lind - Former Staff
Lorrie Doman-Sheydayi '87
Jonathan Long - Principal, Woodstock School

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