

Belle Meade School

October 2014 Newsletter



Join us for the Masquerade Dinner

Enjoy good company, good food, and good music food!

Saturday, November 1, 2014

Featuring Guest: Chef Sylvie Rowand of Laughing Duck Gardens & Cookery & Belle Meade Students

Music by Dontez, Wendi & Smiggy

Accreditation

Belle Meade School has completed the accreditation process through the Virginia Independent Schools Association. The process took a year. It involved self-study, a three-day visit by the accreditation team, and a full, financial audit. Staff, board members, students, and parents all contributed to this accomplishment.

Computer Grant

Belle Meade School received a grant for computers for students and LCD projectors for the classrooms from an anonymous family foundation.

A Beautiful Day

Through the cloudy window of a Belle Meade school room, I gaze out to look at the valley beneath the bright blue sky.

There are massive trees, reaching to the bright midmorning sky, that shines upon the mountain tops, creating a misty haze that rolls down to the rolling hills, and casting dew drops onto the tall green grass, overgrown from the lack of cattle to graze on it. Chickens peck the bare ground, snapping up the sheddings of corn kernels, and savoring the taste of the occasional deer tick that comes with it.

Wispy clouds float by overhead, followed by larger, denser clouds that momentarily block the sun.

A cool fall breeze sweeps through the air and gently lifts the mane and tail of a Percheron horse, munching on a flake of hay, stolen from underneath a sleeping mouser sitting in the sunlight of the barn.

Yes, its another beautiful day at Belle Meade School and farm.

Gabe Busch

New Teacher

When family needs meant deciding to move from Rappahannock nearly ten years ago, it never occurred to me that I would have the opportunity to move back--much less to teach at a unique student- centered and sustainable school like Belle Meade.

I first learned of Belle Meade through a friend, Shelley Shankle, and was intrigued from the start. When Susan sent a teacher application to me, I was impressed further. Far from vague or trendy questions common to other applications, the application probed to the core of who the applicant is and what the goal of education is. Questions like "Describe an experience that contributed to who you are today.", "What gives you joy in teaching?", and (paraphrased) 'How do you teach without reward and punishment?' filled the application.

The emphasis of the application was on purpose rather than process. Purpose and principle as drivers of process rather than the other way around are core to my personal philosophy. With experiential learning, sustainable living, and an emphasis on nurturing the whole person, Belle Meade certainly has lived up to that ideal.

I am enjoying being back in Rappahannock, and I particularly enjoy Belle Meade, a school which is truly a community of learners working together.

John Glass



Johnny Glass

A few weeks ago we got a new teacher for Spanish, Johnny Glass. He is John's son and spent the last two years in Guatemala on a typical religious mission, where he learned how to speak Spanish and improve his existing skills. Belle Meade is his first experience in high school teaching, and I have the feeling he is very confident, knows what he is doing, and learns a lot about how to deal with kids and he likes working

In a few months he wants to start studying at the University of Virginia (UVA); he is undecided about the specific topic but either pre-med or teaching.

He likes to play the guitar, wrestle and is allergic to penicillin.

Lasse Naumann



Living and homeschooling in San Antonio, TX until the age of ten, attending a small school, and then the Waldorf School in Austin, TX up till thirteen, I moved to Maryland two years ago after my dad applied and was accepted for a position at Fort Belvoir. Not finding a school in the area at the time and still in the trauma of uprooting from a place that I'd called home for most of my life, my mom and I moved back to Austin so I could graduate from 8th grade with my class at the Austin Waldorf School. When we returned to our new house in Montclair, VA this summer, we looked for schools and not finding any that really fit, my mom Goggled Waldorf Schools and the search engine came up with Belle Meade. Getting up one early morning to visit the school, I was shocked by the beautiful scenic drive on the way in, one side of the highway lined with the Blue Ridge Mountains and the other with a forest-like tundra. The school was, likewise, resplendent: terrain, students, teachers, and animals. Finding a place that embodied areas of my interests (academics, horse-back riding), students that are bright, kind, fun-loving, and teachers that are caring and interactive was incredible. The visit convinced me to apply, and three weeks ago, I joined the school.

Sydney Hillegas



The Turkeys and the farm

What would thanksgiving be without a turkey? Belle Meade is going to harvest their vegetables and turkeys. They will harvest the turkeys 7-10 days before Thanksgiving. The turkeys are delicious, and they are free-range are not gives hormones or antibiotics.

The school has meat chickens. In the last set of them, we harvested 30 chickens but now we have 50 more to harvest. We also have piglets. We will sell some of them and keep some to harvest. The mommy pig passed away and left us.

We move the cows every five days to a different fields. I like to help harvest. In the fall we chop wood for fire, move hay and straw to the cows, and move the chickens closer to the B&B.

Ethan S. Cole



The Belle Meade Adventure

I step outside to look out over the landscape and see the doe silting on the grass, the horse on the hill happily eating. I'm on the chicken chore with John. We walk slowly, talking about classes and that Gabe should be here. Feed is in the bucket and water is in the steam. There are about 130 to 150 chickens in all.

This is what we do each day;

We carry feed, and we carry hay.

To the government workers that wattle our way.

We go to barn where the majestic steeds

Fuel their way in to our hearts.

The pigs come up and wait for Ava to feed them.

Eggs are a very weird adventure, and I love it.

Every time we clean the school,

the crickets bring the dirt right back in. Ho what fun!

The garden is everything that you will need to survive in life.

Odie Keffer-Sherman

Shelter Building

In tradition with the Belle Meade spirit, sometimes we just need to take an afternoon off and go into the forest to build shelters. We divided into four groups, each one accompanied by a teacher. We were allowed cordage and a knife less than three inches. And with the basic supplies and our wits, we set out!

Every team build a shelter that was unique to the teams mentality. Some were harder to find than others, some were better than others, but all of them were fantastic examples of ingenuity, and survival skills in the face of a difficult challenge.

Leif Kvarnes



Farm Tour

Every year, Belle Meade takes part in the annual farm tour; this year was a huge success. We had many new ideas and new students who contributed to our farm tour. Everyone was amazing in getting all the various jobs done if a bit hectic. This year our activities were apple pressing, hay bale maze, origami classes, and our traditional horse rides. Omni was a very good horse considering we used him all day; he also looked fabulous with the bows in his hair and glitter on his hoofs. This year we decided also to incorporate the silent auction. Some of the items up for auction were food baskets, Pilates classes, and bakery gift cards. Deanna Hammer (head of the silent auction) made flower head garlands that were a big hit! The silent auction lasted until the last and my persona favorite activity the chef cook off.

The chef cook off is an annual competition between three chefs to make the best dish out of the ingredients provided - meat and five fruits and vegetables. A community table has various spices, herbs and oils. This year the meat was pork loin; the fruits and vegetables were tomatoes, apples, zucchini, radishes, and banana peppers. Our cooks were Anna Maher with her assistant me, Ava, Clare Lindsay and her assistant McKayla and Kevin Kraditor with Leif. Teams had 20 minutes to make a dish for the judged to taste. You are judged on presentation and taste. It is extremely hectic, and rather inwardly panicky to be an assistant, and I confess I burned Anna's grilling pan. Sorry Anna! But at the same time, its loads of fun and creates teamwork skills, calming skills, and cooking skills! At the end of 20 minutes, we all put down our knives and explained our dishes. Clare and McKayla had made Bali pork. Anna and I made pork and apple medley, and Kevin and Leif made a different creation. The judges then began the taste testing. It was a very nervous minute as the judges talked and decided who was the winner, at the end John Lesinski announced that Anna and I won! We were extremely happy. The prize was a chicken, which was presented to Anna under the redbud tree. At the end of the chef cook off, we cleaned up the utensils and generally cleaned up anything left from the farm tour. All in all, the farm tour was exciting (if tiring) fun, and we all enjoyed working, cooking, and all the jobs done for the farm tour. I believe it is safe to say that the farm tour was a success!

Ava Hession-Landman



Farm Tour 2014

This year's farm tour was so much fun at Belle Meade! There were all sorts of exciting things going on. The two events that I was most involved in were the pony rides along with Lauren and the Chef Cook Off. I was a sous chef for one of the competitors; Leif and Ava were also sous chefs. Ava was the sous chef for Anna, and they won! The other events that took place were bee-keeping demonstration, hayrides, a hay bale maze, and a silent auction. Also, Gabe and Mike were making fresh apple cider from the apples picked by students, and it was delicious. Dontez was jazzin' the day away, and Alex jumped in with her jembe. I loved this year's farm tour! It was the first one I have been involved in, and I can't wait for next years! The farm tour is annual event we all look forward to, and it is a great opportunity for the community to come and see and learn about our school.

McKayla Colgan

Natural Bridge Field Trip

Several weeks ago Belle Meade Students loaded up into the van to visit Natural Bridge VA and had quite the adventure. The students learned about some history of the bridge and toured a replica of a Monacan village. In the Monacan village they saw renditions of what the traditional structures of the Monacan people, are believed to have looked like. The students also learned about traditional tools, weapons and cooking methods.

The trip unfortunately was extended longer than originally planned, when the van broke down on the way home. Luckily the students still found ways to entertain themselves, despite the situation. The two teachers chaperoning the trip handled things very calmly and had things sorted out in no time. After a short time Mike, (a trusted member of Belle Meade's staff) arrived to pick up the students and returned them home as quickly and safely, as possible. All in all Belle Meade's School trip to Natural Bridge Virginia, was a success. Noah Waller



Natural Bridge Field Trip

On Thursday we went on a field trip to the Natural Bridge. Well, that was what was supposed to have happened. We went to the Natural Bridge, but that wasn't all that happened. I shall start at the beginning.

We arrived at the school at the same time as any other day, 8:00 and had morning circle. After that, we got ourselves and our lunches in the van. The ride to Natural Bridge was rather uneventful, other than the occasional rumbling of the van. It was strange, starting at the back of the van, and moving slowly to the front, until finally Alex's hands were shaking off the steering wheel. We pulled into an exit ramp, thinking that there was a flat tire. Alex and John got out to check, but it was nothing. They got back in, started driving, and had no more problems for the rest of the drive.

When we arrived, we got our tickets and then walked down the stone stairway to the natural bridge. It was huge! Interesting how a little creek could have made such an amazing natural wonder. We then went to the Monacan Indian village. It was cool! There were people there who showed us what would have happened there in 1599 and answered questions on how the food was cooked, hunted, and how the leftover bones, hooves, feathers, etc helped make tools.

Some other things happened, but the time we left was just the beginning. We got onto 81, and the van started rumbling again. I leaned over to the front and was as blunt as I could to John. "John, I don't like that sound." "I don't either," he said, and pulled over the van on the side of the highway. As soon as he killed the engine, white steam started pouring out of the radiator. *I feel like I'm in the scene with Moses and the burning bush*, I thought, *only it's John and a burning radiator*. After a while, some of us got out and sat on the barrier hill waiting for the radiator to 'cool down.' Then we got off an exit and went from gas station to gas station, looking for anti-freeze (why we would get anti-freeze for something overheated, is beyond me). When we finally found it, it was about 4:30. And we were two to three hours away. We had no choice but to call in heavy artillery. THE BUS. The real Belle Meade bus. We managed to crawl to a nearby Sheetz station, where we were rescued at about 5:30.

We got back at 7:00.

Next time, I'm taking the car.

Gabe Basch



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