

# Rhythms alumni news

Highland Hall Waldorf School

Fall 2009

## Hallapalooza

Raising the walls of our theater...

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photo by Micah Smith





## Hallapalooza Captivates A Record Crowd by Bari Borsky

What germinated seven months ago during a capital campaign brainstorming session was cultivated with loving attention and time, and ultimately grew into the best student musical extravaganza ever to grace the pages of Highland Hall history!

Within only a few months' time, co-directors Melissa Etheridge and Amy Tinkham, along with musical director Steve Porcaro, created a Hallapalooza that, no exaggeration, rocked the house. On Saturday, March 28th, with over 1000 guests in attendance, our students from 2nd through 12th grade dazzled, enthralled and amazed the audience with their poise, talent, musicianship, and outstanding ability to work together flawlessly. Approximately eighty Highland Hall students performed twenty-one songs, many of them original, at the Reseda High School auditorium to help raise money for a Performance Theater for Highland Hall. The show opened with a violin solo by 10th grader Claudia Rodriguez-Schroeder, and for the next 90 minutes the audience was treated to a seamless weaving of instrumentals and vocals, including original pieces by Tyler Lane (Waldorf), Kelly Grant, Sean Gordin, Tiffany Wilson, Romeo Testa, and Highland Hall's music director, Erick Bluske.

Alumni Max Kaplan, class of '04, returned to Highland Hall to assist Steve Porcaro with the musical arrangements for several numbers and accompanied 11th grade vocalist, Tiffany Wilson, on the saxophone. Shane Barakan, class of '05, brought the house down with his vocal rendition of "Beautiful Day" by U2.

Inspired by a leadership pledge of \$200,000 from the Ames family and a \$25,000 challenge gift from Highland Hall grandparents, Mel and Joyce Keefer, our community raised \$189,700 the night of Hallapalooza. This, in addition to the \$74,000 raised in the ten days prior to the show, brought the total Hallapalooza pledges and donations for our performance theater to...drum roll please...\$464,000! Our school has now raised 87% of our \$2,000,000 goal.



Alumnus Max Kaplan arranged the music for the show

This Capital Campaign Committee-sponsored fundraising event was also a big success beyond the financial aspect. Our student musicians were privileged to participate in a magical collaboration with professional parents and staff, they were inspired as musicians and performers, and they have inspired their fellow students to also become performers. Hallapalooza will be a lifelong gift for our community. We are extremely grateful to everyone who generously supported this event.

# Our New Gym



Photos of similar gymnasiums by Sprung Structures Inc.



## New Gymnasium Finally Breaks Ground

August 2009 - After more than a year and a half of wrangling with the city of Los Angeles, Highland Hall finally got the green light to begin construction on our new gymnasium. Thanks to a generous gift from one of our Highland Hall families and financing from the Rudolf Steiner Foundation, we are finally making the dream of a gymnasium into a reality. The building is actually a prefabricated structure from Sprung Structures Inc., and will be located in the southeast corner of the field. The gymnasium is expected to be fully operational in a couple of months, just in time for games this fall. After so much anticipation and hard work, the ground breaking brought tears to the eyes of some: "Never has a pile of dirt looked so beautiful." The Highland Hall community is deeply grateful for this wonderful gift whose legacy will be felt for generations to come. Our students will finally be able to enjoy Hawks games...*at home!*



## Capital Campaign Reaches \$1.7M

The 2008-2009 school year saw dramatic economic changes for our country, changes that impacted much of the world. A crisis in the housing market quickly became a banking crisis, and sent ripples through all industries. Highland Hall's capital campaign, which started out on such a positive note, quickly ground to a halt as the country's unemployment rolls grew, tax revenues fell, and a new President of the United States was elected. Understandably, our community, like the rest of the country, was feeling unsure about what was going to happen next.

Fortunately, financial crises don't stop creativity, and the resourceful capital campaign committee, comprised of very talented and dedicated parent volunteers, held two unusual and very special fundraising events to help "jump-start" the campaign again.

Two staged readings of *The Canterbury Tales* were held at the Rudolf Steiner Community Center in Old Pasadena. A \$15,000 matching grant offered by the Anthroposophical Foundation of Los Angeles encouraged and inspired our capital campaign

committee and professional theater parents to create two magical evenings of performance. Attendees were treated to Madrigals beautifully sung by Highland Hall faculty and students, and a medieval tasting menu of appetizers, deliciously prepared and served by two Highland Hall families. The two evening events raised a total of \$30,000 for our future Performance Theater.

The big event of the year - and perhaps the biggest event in our school's history - was our Hallapalooza event in March 2009 at the Reseda High School auditorium. The concert was spirited, inspiring, and really brought the community together as only music and love for our children can do.

Hallapalooza raised \$270,000 in one night for our Performance Theater bringing the Capital Campaign total to \$1.7 million in gifts and pledges. With only \$300,000 remaining to complete our campaign, we are 87% of the way toward our \$2 million goal, and hopeful that our resilient and talented community will begin construction on our Performance Theater next spring.



# Graduation 2009



## Highland Hall's Largest Graduating Class

The class of 2009 was Highland Hall's largest yet with 29 graduating seniors. Lynn Rappaport and Coach Humberto Ramirez were the sponsors of this diverse and sometimes rambunctious group of individuals. At this year's graduation ceremony short speeches were the norm punctuated by the occasional rap song or musical performance. A highly talented group of students this class will be remembered for their individuality as well as their willingness to accept each others' differences.



2009 Sponsors:  
Lynn Rappaport &  
Humberto Ramirez



## 2009 College Acceptances

Keesje Avis- Atlantic College, UK

Eve Axness- Syracuse, SUNY-Purchase, Ithaca College, Hampshire, Bennington, Lewis & Clark, Humboldt, Sonoma State, Cal State Long Beach

Julia Bowman- UC Berkeley, Tulane, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Whitman, Lewis & Clark, Sonoma, American, UC Santa Cruz, Skidmore, University of Puget Sound, CSU Humboldt, Westminster

Caitlin Campbell- College for Creative Studies, Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design, Evergreen, Western State College of Colorado, Unity, Humboldt, Hawaii Pacific University, CSU Monterey Bay

Hunter Douglass-Cooper- Santa Monica College

Dani Gurfinkel-Feingold- Brandeis, CSU Monterey Bay

Jake Hanna- Columbia School of Chicago, University of Puget Sound, Belmont University

Diego Herrera- Lewis & Clark, San Francisco State, Evergreen, Whittier College

Devin John- Wells, CSU East Bay, Humboldt

Cate Kennan- Bennington, Lewis & Clark, Sarah Lawrence, Marlboro, Hampshire

Ella Mielniczenko- Emerson, Hampshire

Lander Oppen- UC Santa Cruz, Humboldt, Sonoma State

Hannah Phillips- Hampshire

Lance Pittock- UC Santa Cruz

Hannah Rubinek- Vassar

Anisa Saliefendic- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Loyola Marymount, Dominican University,

Varsha Strauss- UC Santa Barbara

Emma Stuart- University of Oregon, Portland State, CSU Monterey Bay, SF State, Sonoma State,

Lindsay Turner- Minneapolis College of Art & Design

Valerie Uzan- Culinary Institute of America

Danny Veytia- Sarah Lawrence, NYU, Hampshire, Lewis and Clark, Ithaca College, Emerson, University of Denver

## Faculty News

### Highland Hall Establishes the Patty McNulty Tuition Assistance Fund

At this year's annual soiree it was our privilege to honor our longtime kindergarten teacher and friend, Patty McNulty. Patty retired in June of 2008 and so it was with great pleasure to welcome her back for this special evening to thank her for her numerous contributions to our school-- including nearly 30 years of teaching as well as her many years of serving on the Board of Trustees. Patty's heartfelt words about children, life and Waldorf education were truly inspiring.



In Patty's honor, Highland Hall announced the establishment of the Patty McNulty Tuition Assistance Fund - a scholarship fund designed to provide financial assistance for new and existing Highland Hall students. The guests of the soiree shared in the enthusiasm for this fund and kicked it off by raising \$23,000 that night! In total, this year's soiree raised approximately \$95,000 for tuition assistance and other vital programs. What an amazing evening, and what a wonderful tribute to Patty!



## Interview with Kelly Ferris, Class of '97

Kelly Ferris, M.Ed., daughter of longtime Highland Hall teacher, Laura Ferris, currently lives in Seattle, WA and works as a behavior analyst specializing in children with autism.

Interview by Jacqui Dres, June '09

### **Tell us about the work that you're currently involved in.**

I'm currently spending my time professionally in two different ways. Three-quarters of my time I'm involved in a private practice serving children with autism and their families. The other portion of my time I am the director of an inclusive preschool program called Families for Effective Autism Treatment of Washington.

### **Tell me about the organization you formed.**

About two years ago, I formed a partnership with one of my former colleagues called the Organization for Research and Learning. We work primarily with children with autism and their families in their homes. For children with a development disability it's really important that services integrate the whole family. As the student gains new skills the people around them have to learn to treat them as a different person as they gain capabilities. We also work with the families and help them see different ways of interacting with their children.

Because our work is done within the home we try to tread as lightly as possible, but sometimes our students receive up to 25 hours a week of intervention. So that's a lot of extra people coming through someone's home. Siblings are trying to understand why you're coming 4 or 5 times a week for their brother or sister, and you end up building a relationship with everyone in the family.

### **How did you become interested in the area of autism?**

In my sophomore year at UC Santa Cruz, I responded to an ad for a summer job doing outdoor activities with a nine year old boy with learning disabilities. The mother was homeschooling her two twins who were both on the autism spectrum. It was an interesting experience walking into their home because there wasn't any area that wasn't dedicated resource-wise to the children and their education. I was impressed. This was dedication far beyond what I had ever seen--and I had seen a lot of dedicated teachers having grown up with two of them. For me, it was an immediate match and so I spent the entire summer with the boy teaching him to ride a bike and play basketball. In the fall they offered me a teaching position as his shadow aide at school. In the meantime I was still attending college full time, so I worked with him for two and a half years during the rest of my undergraduate studies.

### **What was your undergraduate degree?**

It was actually Neurobiology. Originally I was headed in a pre-med direction. Then, as I started the aide position, I became interested in behavior analysis. I decided to pursue a graduate degree in special education and completed coursework toward certification as a Behavior Analyst. My medical background has been very helpful. When I am reading research and literature there are a lot of biomedical treatments out

there for children with autism, and I feel I'm a better consumer because of that background.

### **Where did you pursue your graduate studies?**

I did my graduate studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. The aide position I held in Santa Cruz was supervised by two different firms in Seattle. Both agencies offered me positions in Seattle in the field of autism while I was attending grad school.

### **Can you recall anything different about your Waldorf education as you went on to college?**

Absolutely. My first English class in college I remember that I had read nine out of the ten books in my ninth and tenth grade classes at Highland Hall. I thought, "Wow, I've already read stuff from college." Also, the writing requirement in college did not feel so overwhelming to me after having written so many main lesson books. When papers were assigned it was not so daunting to me. Also, the teachers at Highland Hall required so many outside resources I was already prepped for researching in different ways and writing up my opinions and ideas. The biggest adjustment was mainly the size of the classes where you had hundreds of people attending a lecture. It seemed a little impersonal to me. I tended to be the person going to speak with the professor during office hours because otherwise it would have felt too impersonal.

### **Are there any aspects of your Waldorf education that have carried forward and helped you in your present work?**

Yes. Primarily the closeness and ease of relationship building. It may be a part of who I am, but my whole educational experience has been close relationships with people. I call people up for their birthday that I've known since I was four years old. And I think it's a foreign experience for most people to have ties with people from such a young age who are not family members. Also, I think that because of my education at Highland Hall I have a true respect for all kinds of people. When I look at my class of 13 that I graduated with, I think each one of them would have represented a different clique in public school and the odds are that we probably wouldn't have interacted or known one another. You would have the sports crew, the nerds, the preppy people, the hipsters, and all of that. I feel privileged to have been close with people who approach life in such different ways. And I would have missed out on those opportunities if I had been just a part of the same group of people like me. In my work I'm dealing with all sorts of families. The Seattle area is a pretty diverse place, and autism crosses all racial and cultural lines. So, if I'm going to be a good provider then I have to be able to understand and to be interested in all sorts of different people. So I feel that my background and confidence in relationship building makes me better at my job.

### **Is there any message that you would say to the current graduates of Highland Hall?**

It's a pretty privileged experience getting an education at Highland Hall. And with that privilege there comes a responsibility of awareness. Being a part of Waldorf education is a unique opportunity and so I'd tell them to remember this, and to give back and share.

More information about the Organization for Research and Learning can be found at [www.O4RL.com](http://www.O4RL.com).

# Alumni Updates

Donald Johnson ('61) Bangkok, Thailand Occupation: Retired from the American military. Working on a documentary of my Combat Search & Rescue teams efforts in the Vietnam War. Other activities: skydive California when in the USA for business, surf Indonesia for fun and relaxation, motorcycle around southeast Asia. Family news: Siblings are: Heather, Holly, and Jill. HH influence: Kept me inquisitive about life and living. Learning was paramount even though formal education ended; Maintain a skeptical mind.

Holly Johnson ('69) San Juan Capistrano, CA Occupation: Waldorf Teacher; Family News: My brother Don Johnson (Noah Williams' 1st class) lives happily in Thailand. My sister Heather (Miss Liponcott's 1st class) lives in Port Hueneme and is hosting the upcoming reunion. I am teaching in a Charter Waldorf School in Aliso Viejo, Orange County--a challenge of a different sort...balancing public and private! HH influence: In every way! Gave me my "zest for life", my desire to "look beyond" and a profession that is never boring.

Susanne Mokslavskas-Lambert ('73) Valley Village Occupation: I am currently working as exhibition coordinator and art transport liaison for a Culver City based company. Family news: My son, Julien, is a Senior at Highland Hall, Class of 2010 !! HH influence: All-ways.

Giselle Teller-Holt ('73) Newbury Park, CA Occupation: Chemical dependency counseling. Family news: I have been accepted to a doctoral program which starts in October. I will be working towards a PhD in Clinical Psychology with a Somatic Psychology emphasis. HH influence: HH taught me to focus on the whole person: body, mind, emotions and spirit. I take that with me into the work I do by treating addiction by treating the whole person.

Kim Emanuel ('73) Montclair District Oakland Hills, CA Occupation: Currently a Semiconductor Device Engineer (a branch of electrical engineering specializing in micro/nano scale technologies). Previously an art director/graphic designer in the advertising industry. I also have a small business producing very natural hand made gourmet soaps. Beginning to design electronically sensitive gates that respond to human presence. Family: Lina the cat. Bob the cat. Simon the dog. Several unnamed goldfish and a fat Koi. HH influence: Every day and in too many ways to count. Highland Hall presented me with a balance of my creative and analytical aspects -- it is what makes an engineer/artist possible.

Thor Biberman ('73) San Diego CA Occupation: Reporter, San Diego Daily Transcript Family news: My son John graduates high school next Thursday. He will be headed off to Dartmouth in the fall. How time flies.

Alma Hecht ('73) San Francisco CA Occupation: Landscape designer, Second Nature Design, <http://secondnature.bz>

Julie Weitz ('75) Santa Monica, CA Occupation: TV Agent in television, representing writers, directors, producers and actors. Family news: I have two beautiful children, a daughter 17 a son 15. My son plays the violin quite seriously in two significant orchestras, my daughter is a madrigal at her school, and president of the board of her youth group. My wonderful husband of 20 years is a concert cellist and principal player for the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and Calif. Philharmonic. HH influence: Gave me the tools I need to interpret my world. Allowed me to be a great communicator, both verbally and in the written word.



**August '09 - Classes of '67-'69 Reunion:** (standing) Nathan Ferris, Holly Johnson, Dana Williams, Brendan Burns, Doug Moxness, Chris Hartwick, Tom McNamara, Peter Carlson, Kim Lapin, Alex Amatuzio; (seated) Phoebe Barnum, Heather Johnson, Chris Bertelli & Nathan Ferris

Paul Sonner ('75) Lake Ann, MI Occupation: I am artist/faculty at the Interlochen Center for the Arts and Interlochen Arts Academy; also Concertmaster, Traverse Symphony Orchestra, and Concertmaster, Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra. I also perform in many chamber music venues as well as solo. Family news: Still married to the wonderful Sandra Apeseche. Andre just completed his MM in percussion performance-New England Conservatory. Evita graduates, with performance/academic honors from the Interlochen Arts Academy, on Saturday. She will be attending either Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, or Northwestern University (guitar performance). HH influence: Yes, in every way imaginable, including the way I live, perform, and teach.

Shannon (Kelley) Farran ('75) Rocklin, CA Occupation: I have been working for State Farm as an Auto Claim Representative for the last 21 years. Family news: After Highland Hall, I attended Patrick Henry Junior High, Granada Hills High School, Pierce College, and then off to Cal State Northridge (majoring in Computer Science and Sociology). My husband Bill and I have been married for 22 years, have a son Ian who is 12 (soon to be starting the 7th grade), and 2 young Golden Retrievers. Busy, busy, busy!!! HH influence: Highland Hall widened my experiences in both music and art. Once I entered back into the public school system, these avenues were available. I continued to study and experience them in high school, college and at home. My son enjoys

art himself, and while only entering his art project for the year book cover once (when he was in 2nd grade) he won. Last year I was fortunate enough to reunite with our class teacher Mr Monks and a few of my classmates. I have many, many class pictures, dating back from Kindergarten through our 8th grade. I'm hoping to get them organized and placed on a disc to share.

Iris Eberle Glosson ('76) Yorktown, VA Occupation: I am a part time cardio kickboxing instructor at a YMCA and another local gym. I also substitute teach for a line dance instructor at times.

Family news: I am married and have two boys. Eric is 27 and is in the Navy. James is 22 and just graduated from William and Mary with a degree in Kinesiology. My husband is an orthopedic Physician assistant. My father, Gotthard Eberle (a retired Waldorf school teacher who once taught at Highland Hall) and my mother live in PA. and are doing well. HH influence: I think exposure to the arts helped me discover my love for dance. At the time when I attended Highland hall there was a man (Mario) that would come and teach folk dancing.... and I found I really loved anything to do with music and dance.

Jonathan A Kanner ('77) Santa Barbara, CA Occupation: Senior Multi-Disciplined Engineer (A little chemistry, some mechanical and thermal analysis, some optics lately, lots of electronics, occasional light quantum physics) - I like variety.

Other fields of interest: music, particularly choral singing, anything outdoors, and especially theology. Family news: Our grandson started school this year and our oldest granddaughter is in Jr high. Son-in-law is a perpetual student but also teaches at his local college so I only have to pay tuition for the children these days. HH influence: Made me very interested in exploring a full variety of ideas. Introduced me to the arts and left me loving them. Helped me to be open to new ways and ideas without becoming overly credulous.

Tina Margulies McMinn ('77) Thousand Oaks, CA Occupation: Mom/Physicians Assist. Family news: Matt Margulies is opening a restaurant, "Matteo's Pub" in Nevada City! Jolie is an incredible photographer in L.A. Tony is getting married to his long time love, Suzanne next year! Mikey just got married to a wonderful woman, named Mai! My son, Sean, just became Editor in Chief for his senior year in H.S. My youngest, Will, is a pitcher on his baseball team. HH influence: I think the way in which I relate to and understand people, not only came from my family, but in a big part from my H.H. family!

Alexandra Carlyle Clark ('78) Monroe, WA Occupation: Co-producer of Last Leaf Productions, a non-profit touring theatre for Shakespeare in the Park, a theatre for young audiences and dinner theatre entertainment for private parties. HH influence: Music and theatre were a big part of my short time at HH, and they continue to be to this day.



Sheryl Tash ('78) Simi Valley, CA Occupation: Marketing and sales in the healthcare industry.



Win Weaver ('78) Tujunga, CA Occupation: Yachts Sales, Repair and Maintenance, Auto Parts and Repair, Machinist, Picture Vehicle Rentals, Music Producer and Recording Engineer, Film Producer, Editor and Camera Man, Publishing, Computer

Repair and Service, Electronic Technician, Electrician, Science, R & D on Zero Emission Technology. HH influence: Everything positive in my life is a direct result of my attendance at Highland Hall, and I give a great deal of credit to Mr. Brousseau (my teacher) for helping to spark my many interest that I have to this day. There is no way I would have survived in public school, and at age 7, I knew that.

Sandrawati Wibowo ('78) Jakarta, Indonesia Occupation: Employee of multi national company in Indonesia. Family news: I am married and have 2 children : son 23 yrs, and daughter 16 yrs. HH influence: After graduating from Highland Hall, I continued to University of Southern California (USC) and graduated in 1982 as BSC in Finance.

Gina Eckstine ('78) Woodland Hills, CA Occupation: I am a singer and singing teacher. I recently released a CD entitled "Everything I Have Is Yours," which is a tribute to my late father, Billy Eckstine. Family news: I have a beautiful son, Gibson. He is a very creative and talented 9 year old boy. He plays guitar and loves magic. HH influence: Yes, the course of life that I have followed is a creative one, and HH was the basis and foundation that I have built my life on. I love the creative development that Waldorf education encourages. It is wonderful that creative kids, like I was, have a place to be nurtured and encouraged.

Clay Baker ('79) Portola Valley, CA Occupation: CEO-Clay Baker Design, an interdisciplinary design consultancy. CBD's capabilities span a broad range of design disciplines, including: traditional home design, remodels and additions, "green high-performance" home design, modular homes, custom furniture & cabinetry, industrial design, consumer products and packaging. Family news: I'm currently working on a new startup company and my wife Mari recently became CEO of PlayFirst, Inc. a gaming software company in San Francisco. HH influence: Highland Hall provided room for a lot of creativity in my school work. When I was in 9th grade the woodshop was opened with Brian Doughty as the shop teacher. I've kept a woodshop of my own ever since and have tried to share my passion for woodworking with kids whenever I can.



Elizabeth (Betsy) LaBounty-Yung ('79) Shadow Hills, CA Occupation: Director of Shipping & Logistics for Matthews Studio Equipment Inc.

Lisa Switt ('79) Oak Park CA Occupation: crossing guard & teacher. Family news: my father is still alive, my mother died 11 years ago

Mikael (Magnus) Persson ('80) Eslöv, Sweden Occupation: Labor market secretary, interested in overtone singing, creative expression such as video and photography, creating healing soundscapes and recording them, writing, coaching people, alternative health, gardening, permaculture, ecofriendly ways of living, vegetarian life style, yoga, chi gong. Family news: I have a new family member: my cat Sudde. HH influence: Through the very inspiring teacher Dale Howard I opened my musical ear to classical music that I didn't usually listen to very much, previously.



Lisa Friedman Sheehan ('80) Torrance CA Occupation: Last 20 years working as a Human Resources professional and currently taking a sabbatical to pursue my artist passion (watercolor and acrylic painting) Family News: I'm happily married to David Sheehan and together we are avid cyclists (road & mountain bikes).



Susan Armstrong Selbrede ('81) West Hills, CA Occupation: owner of a digital print and graphics design business. HH influence: the way I view life... 13 years at HH, how can I not be influenced?

Michelle Teller Rosicky ('81) Redondo Beach, CA Occupation: Wedding Photographer. Family news: We're getting ready to build a house in the Hollywood Hills HH influence: HH developed my creative mind, imagination and taught me the Greek alphabet long before sorority row. I'm probably the only Jew who can harmonize to "The First Noel" (and lip sync any carol at that) and I'm also about to make a yarn toy for my cat, as learned in fifth grade....

Anna Torti - Villano ('82) Castaic, CA Occupation: Regional Account Manager for Solid Concepts, Inc. Family news: married for 18 years with two kids - son, Angelo, who is 14 years old and finishing up 9th grade and daughter, Daniella, who is 11 years old finishing up 5th grade. HH influence: Of course - Studied and received my BA in Graphic Design

Richard Hodkinson ('82) Agua Dulce, CA Occupation: I am currently running a private jet management, charter, and sales company with offices in Van Nuys and Scottsdale. We provide a turnkey flight department for individuals or companies that have private jets. When the owners are not using the aircraft we typically charter the aircraft out to help defer some of the ownership costs. Family news: Unfortunately my father passed away May 16th. My mother who will be 91 in January is doing great. HH influence: Many ways, I think I am more creative as a result of my education at Highland Hall. This manifests itself

in many ways, including business. I also feel I am more tolerant of my fellow man. I think Highland Hall produces better citizens of the world. This is probably a result of many things especially the family feel between students and staff.

Steven Winkler ('82) Henderson, Nevada Occupation: Physician: Internal Medicine and Critical Care. Family News: I have been happily married for 21 years to Highland Hall alumnus, Sharon Navach ('84). We have a beautiful 5 1/2 year old daughter and a 13 year old son. My favorite past time is spending time doing anything with my family. HH influence: I believe the HH experience has helped me to be open minded and less judgmental of people's differences.

Jim McRea ('83) Pretoria, South Africa Occupation: Diplomat, supporting emergency communications systems at US Embassies and Consulates across sub-Saharan Africa. HH influence: Yup. For instance, a good background in languages is important in my job, it is often important to be able to communicate in French (West Africa) German (Southern Africa) and sometimes in Spanish and in Russian, situation depending.

Mindy Gaswirth Oswalt ('84) Winnetka, CA Occupation: medical transcription/stay at home mom

Stacey Strausberg ('84) Vancouver, WA Occupation: I am a Systems Engineer for Symantec Corporation. I specialize in Data Archiving and eDiscovery. Family news: My son Ethan and I are healthy and enjoying each day together. HH influence: Holistic view of seeing life.

Manuel John Baca ('84) Burbank, CA Occupation: I am a Prop Man for film and television. HH influence: For work I've had to use many of the skills learned at H.H., some of which were calligraphy and teaching actors how to use a dip pen, sewing, knitting, painting and drawing, music, gardening, helping writers with the different mythologies, and most importantly being able to use my imagination and create props with short notice.

Joan Kahn ('85) Vermont Occupation: Administrative work and database design. Family news: We have two children ages 9 and 5. We love living in Vermont, and don't get back to CA much any more. HH influence: My children go to a Waldorf school. I have been on the board of the school and on various committees - so it is an ongoing theme in my life.



A day at the office for Damon Gold ('86)

Damon Gold ('86) Lake Tahoe, CA. (Tahoe City) Occupation: recording engineer, sound for film mixer, videographer, photographer, cameraman, video editor, pro skier and pro snow kayaker. I live at Lake Tahoe where I am lucky enough to be able to pursue my passion in the recording arts, film making, photography and outdoor gravity sports. Family news: we skied 100 days this year (individually) and so far no injuries. Whitewater kayak season is here along with skateboarding and mountain biking season. We plan on spending time at the Volcom skateboard park in Mammoth a lot this summer. HH influence: it got me into music and recording, but not having computer training was a huge detriment. I don't care if Steiner did not teach it. If you are going anywhere in life you need to understand technology. A computer science class would have really given me a great head start.

Kelly McLaughlin ('86) Gualala, CA - 75 miles N. of San Francisco. Occupation: I am currently working for my husband who is a custom residential architect here on the coast. I am responsible for his PR, marketing, and I consult on many of his projects with the interior finishes. I am also attending the Art Institute where I am completing a degree in Interior Design. Our firm's work can be viewed at [www.mbwarchitect.com](http://www.mbwarchitect.com) Family news: My husband and I are celebrating our 3rd anniversary this month (although we've been together for almost 12 years now). HH influence: Highland Hall was so supportive, creatively. The curriculum, the broad range of electives, and even the alternative classes tossed in like "surveying" were so useful in helping me see how dimensional the world was that I was about to enter. I feel that this exposure to variety ignited a curiosity in me to continue learning throughout my adulthood.

Michele "Mitch" Farrant-Gordon ('87) Vancouver, WA Occupation: Stay at home mom. But I do some quilting for a local quilt shop. I make the samples that hang on the wall to show customers what classes are available. Family news: I've been married for 17 years to my husband Richard and we have 2 kids. Allen is 12 and Vivian is 6. HH influence: I love quilting and Grandma Williams was my first teacher. I made a pot holder which I still have and it was all done by hand.

Christopher Ernst ('87), Cumming, GA Occupation: Wireless Security Test Engineer. HH influence: Many

Wes Radulovich a.k.a. Wes Parrish ('87) North Hollywood, CA Occupation: Fifth grade Math and Science teacher at Campbell Hall School in Valley Village. I also run a chess camp in the summer. Family news: My daughter, Milla, will be attending HH starting in September. HH influence: It has a great impact in how I present information to the students in my classes. It probably prevented me from being a super competitive uber-jock (thanks for that HH). I can write with a fountain pen and I can shade, like a super-dorf hero. I feel comfortable peering through the eyes of others to look alternative

perspectives to many situations.

Sari Sherwood (Bearson) ('87) Glendale, CA Occupation: Software Engineer, focusing on SAP software. Family news: We have a new son, now 8 months old. Samuel Ryan Sherwood was born on 10.3.08. HH influence: Appreciation of nature, color and green living.

Randi Wilson ('88) Tarzana, CA Occupation: Just opened up a retail store in the Topanga Mall called Flip Flop Shops. Opening a 2nd location at Universal City Walk in July.

Jamie Corsetti (Trudeau) ('88) Eureka, CA Occupation: Certified Public Accountant Family news: I have been married for 11 years to my fabulous husband, Roy. We have 2 girls, Madeline (8) and Megan (6). HH influence: I would say that Highland Hall influenced my life by allowing me to meet some of the most amazing people I have ever met. It is those people and the experiences we have shared over the years that have made a positive impact on my life!

Jeddrah Schmit ('88) Studio City, CA Occupation: Singer-Songwriter, Producer, Artist, Spiritual Guide, Artistic Consultant, Personal Assistant, Multi-Tasker, Girlfriend, Mother to cute rescue dog & townhome owner. Family news: My Father is doing rather well right now in The Eagles, My Mom lives happily far-far away in Costa Rica, my Sister is building a fine career in the Fine Arts, my little Brother is a passionate musician & my Aunts, Uncles, and Grandmothers are all getting along well. HH influence: I find it to be an extremely inspirational & challenging adventure to implement my deeply ingrained teachings of being creative and unique into the real world. Once you let down the barriers of your own fears of being 'your true self' it becomes a tranquil sea of communication with others... otherwise it's a choppy, thrilling ride into the beyond.



Takeshi Suesada ('88) Hudson, NY Occupation: Working at Triform Camphil Community. Living and working with people with (so-called) special needs. Speech and Drama. Faculty of the afternoon coursework. Workmaster bakery. Education for the young volunteers that come and work here, offering coworker orientation. Creating and celebrating Christian festivals of the year. Family news: Married since 1998. Have two children. The older is in the 3rd grade at Hawthorn Valley Wadorf School. The younger goes to a Waldorf play group. HH influence: The main lesson classes I received in high school were eye openers! The way subjects were offered changed my view of life. Thank you! That is why I am still involved with Anthroposophy.

Nicholas Bird ('88) Chapel Hill, N.C. Occupation:



I am the Vice President of Medical Services for the Divers Alert Network. My primary area of medical interest is diving and hyperbaric medicine. Family news: We escaped from Utah and are very happy in

NC. HH influence: I have a broader, kinder and more humorous approach to my interactions than many that I meet. I attribute this largely to my time at HH and the types of relationships that were formed during a critical time in my life.

Adela Schwab ('89) North Hollywood, CA Occupation: I work in Animation in Lip Assignment for the show's "Family Guy" and "The Cleveland Show". My job is to assign the mouths to every sound that is made. I also do spiritual work as an intuitive and medium with private clients. ([adelalavine.com](http://adelalavine.com)). Each are totally different from the other, one grounds the other allow me to fly. Family news: My Father passed 10 years ago. My brothers and sisters are all doing very well and alumni themselves. HH influence: My spiritual life I realize more and more is due to the magic that was introduced to me at a young age. As well as our guide teacher, is that right? In 12th grade it helped me through the hardest time of my life, my mother's passing.

Elizabeth Brownlow (aka Betsey Sparks) ('89) Culver City, CA Occupation: Marketing Consultant. I have worked at Nestle for the past 9 years, currently consulting with PowerBar (owned by Nestle). Family news: I have two children, a girl 5 1/2 years old and a boy 3 years old. My daughter is attending Ocean Charter School in West LA, a Waldorf methods charter school; it has been a wonderful experience for our family, and I have a new appreciation for the Waldorf training that I received now that I am seeing it from a parent's perspective! HH influence: Appreciation for the arts, appreciation for different educational models, and a wholistic way of looking at issues.



**Class of '89 Reunion:** Claudine Cashion, Kevin Crosby, Jonah Weiland, Jennifer Nachbar, Kamala Gold, JJ Campbell, Candice Appleton, Tina Schepers, Chris Sorensen, Akie Kimura, Rachel Swearengin, Adela Fulton, Matt Myerhoff & Alaric Booth



# Alumni Updates (continued)

Tracy Stafford ('89) Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Occupation: hairdresser Family news: they all live in Florida also. HH influence: it was an excellent school

Audrey Day-Williams ('90) Cambridge England  
Occupation: Just quit job in online advertising to take a few years off to be a mom, which will start sometime in September. Family news: Noah Williams IV will be a grandfather in September.

Abigail Rattay-Miller ('90) Bakersfield, CA  
Occupation: Infant Development Specialist. I work with special need children 0-3 years of age. Family news: My son is learning to drive and I think I will lose all my hair before he passes the test!! I'll be celebrating my 18 year wedding anniversary in the Dominican Republic (the first vacation without kids!) HH influence: Way too many to describe!

Monica Palma Smith ('91) Santa Clarita, CA  
Occupation: I am the Regional Director for a Foster Care and Adoption Program in North Hills, CA. Family news: My husband and I just celebrated 12 years of marriage. We have an 8 year old daughter and 4 year old son. HH influence: There are many, many ways in which my education at Highland Hall has influenced my life. Too many to note. But I do what I can each day to pass it all on to my children.

Heather Bre Kopitz Staley ('92) Northridge, CA  
Occupation: Just retired from a 12 year career as a fashion designer. Taking some time to paint & look for a good PhD program. Also very active in preserving wildlife especially wolves and working with the SPCA on animal rescues. Family news: Married to HH alum '94 Darren Staley. HH influence: HH gave me a very broad education that has helped me learn several languages, understand different cultures & get involved with many different groups to better the planet.

Petra Wismeijer ('94) Nieuw Amsterdam, Holland  
Occupation: desktop publisher. I'd love to hear what my former classmates have been up to lately...

Vanessa Hooper ('95) Silverlake (near downtown LA)  
Occupation: Last fall I graduated with a Masters in Architecture from SCI-Arc. I am now working on a project to develop schools for Burmese refugees in Mae Sot, Thailand. We currently have our 1st school under construction and I leave in June to do a needs evaluation for the 54 other schools, and to set up the framework for developing. Family news: I am currently 5 months pregnant with my first child, due in early September.

Lisa Torti ('96) Las Vegas, NV  
Occupation: Interior Designer/Artist/Jewelry Designer & Make Up Artist. HH influence: Definitely by encouraging my artistic side.

Rachel Pines ('96) Portland, Oregon  
Occupation: I have an MBA in not-for-profit management. Before I became a full-time mom I was the Assistant Director of a community center in the Silicon Valley. Family news: My husband, Itai, and I will celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary this

year. Our son, Zachary will turn five in a couple of weeks and our daughter, Madeline, will turn two in July. We've got our hands full! HH influence: I find that my parenting is influenced by my time spent at Highland Hall. I have vivid memories of water coloring with Miss Brenda - something I think about while I paint with my kids. I let my kids grow at their own pace (something I learned to value at HH) and I try to provide them with all of the creative outlets that I enjoyed at HH.

Amir Magal ('96) Venice California  
Occupation: Photographer and children's book Illustrator. HH influence: I am always sharing about my education in Highland hall. It has affected me in many ways. Thanks for being there in my life!



**August '09 - Class of '99 Reunion:** Sarah Lundstedt, Megan Ross, Shannon Aragon, Scott Thomsen, Douglas Tsai, Alexandra Geary-Stock, Mike Wells, Michael DiMassa, Robert Stone, Dylan Dordward-Sachs & Audrey Clark

Jessica Tan (Seward) ('97) Carson, CA  
Occupation: looking for work in Corporate Risk Management.

Katherine Anne Pepper (formerly Shapiro) ('97) Las Vegas, NV  
Occupation: massage therapist/esthetician. Family news: My son turned 9 in April! HH influence: HH was and still is one of the most inspiring and influential experiences of my entire life. To this day I tell stories from my days at HH.

Eva Greiner ('96) Jena, Germany  
Occupation: Clinical doctor (Neurology). HH influence: Wonderful memories (Indian trip!!!), connection to the USA.

Jeffrey Hyatt ('97) Chatsworth, CA  
Occupation: I am currently working for MTA as a bus operator. HH influence: I would like to send my son there.

Frederica Rose ('98) Seattle, WA  
Occupation: Social Work.

Sonja Williams ('98) Mt. Washington, L.A.  
Occupation: I teach middle school math and science in South Los Angeles. Family news: Instead of having children I've joined the circus. It's twice as dangerous - and almost less diaper changing. We're putting on a big show this summer near downtown starting in mid June. Please come check us out: [www.cirqueberzerk.com](http://www.cirqueberzerk.com). Clearly I never got over annual play production.

HH influence: Highland Hall has influenced all aspects of my life. I have no T.V. and instead constantly heap my plate with an unfathomable amount of creative activities. I approve of the creative, wild people I've chosen to spend my time with and I am ever grateful for those I am still in touch with from school.

Michael Di Massa ('99) Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
Occupation: Working as a journalist since 2005, I've been with my current newspaper, the Sherwood Park News, since December. Previously, I worked for three-and-a-half years at a newspaper in Pahrump, Nevada near Las Vegas. Family news: Married May 3, 2008 and immigrated to Canada as a permanent resident on Nov. 27, 2008 to be with my Canadian wife,

Coralie, in Edmonton. HH influence: Karen Grant deserves a lot of the credit for what I'm doing. She provided me with encouragement about my writing in my senior year at Highland Hall. I also continue to have an appreciation for the arts, which I try to express through the photos I take while on the job and for fun.

Sarah Lundstedt ('99) Eugene, OR  
Occupation: I am graduating from law school and will start a year long judicial clerkship in Alaska in the fall.

Justin Kern ('01) Beverly Hills, CA  
Occupation: Currently a senior job captain at Landry Design Group. designing, developing and monitoring construction of custom homes in a variety of styles. Currently working on several projects in Los Angeles as well as overseas in Asia.

Kandis Gilmore ('01) Rohnert Park, CA  
Occupation: Work at an environmental non-profit called Community Clean Water Institute and as a research technician at Sonoma State University, working on the pollination ecology of three endangered plant species that grow in vernal pools. Will be attending graduate school at Sonoma State in the fall for a Master's degree in Biology. Family news: My brother, Kenny Gilmore, is on tour in Europe with a band called Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti. He recently completed a North American tour across the U.S. and Canada, including the Coachella music festival. HH influence: Many influences.

Katharine (Kate) Slater ('02) San Diego, CA  
Occupation: Currently working on a Ph.D in children's literature and trauma theory at UC San Diego. Family news: My mother recently retired from her position as business advisory director at the LA Unified School District. My father is still active in private practice as a psychologist. Both are well. HH influence: My Highland Hall education was instrumental in shaping the person I am today; I know I would not be as musical, as imaginative, or as visually oriented as I am without my nine years of Waldorf education.

# Alumni Updates (continued)

Tiffany Sazzmann Conn ('02) Mar Vista, CA Occupation: Hostess at the Enterprise Fish Co. in Santa Monica. Family news: My husband and I are having a baby in December.

Lara Spade Toselli ('03) Sacramento CA Occupation: This September, I will be moving up to Sacramento to start the Rudolf Steiner College Master's program and training to become a Waldorf teacher. It will be a pretty big relocation project for spouse and myself, but we are both very excited.

Kira Weidner ('04) Chicago, IL Occupation: Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology

Stephen Forner ('05) Spokane, WA Occupation: I'm a Mechanical Engineer wishing to specialize in energy analysis and conservation.

Jacob DeMonte-Finn ('05) Northridge, CA Occupation: I am acting (represented by the Daniel Hoff Agency), going to school at CSUN, and recently changed my major to Cinema and Television Arts with an emphasis on multimedia production. I recently joined the Global Medical Brigades to go to Honduras to provide medical services to its people...As for my family: my brother Gabriel's artwork is out-of-this-world good. He'll be in Santa Cruz next fall. HH influence: It has shaped my outlook on life and the world, and instilled in me the sense that I am obligated to do what I can to make that world better. I feel emotionally and spiritually connected to all I meet--all I see, even--and I have no doubt that my Waldorf education is responsible for that.

Ian Axness ('05) Oberlin, Ohio Occupation: Music (pianist, conductor, arranger). HH influence: I recently started drawing casually, just for fun with markers or anything, and it just feels right! I guess that has to be a Waldorf influence!



Erin Daniels ('06) Salt Lake City, Utah  
Occupation: I am currently the Outdoor Recreation Student Assistant at Westminster College. I am also an outdoor Recreation Trip Leader, Winter at Westminster Ambassador, and I have an Americorps job this summer with the Utah Conservation Corps (UCC) in the Manti-La Sal National Forest in Southeastern Utah. Environmental Studies Major and a Paleontology Minor. HH influence: My whole entire education from Kindergarten to 12th grade at Highland Hall has influenced my life at every turn, and I am only where I am now because of it.

Mackenzie Howe ('07) Azusa, CA  
Occupation: I am a global studies major at Azusa Pacific University. I just finished a semester in downtown LA. It was an urban immersion experience requiring me to intern, live, and study in the inner city. I am now processing the past 3 months, getting ready to live in Azusa full time again, and working at a restaurant. HH influence: My education at Highland hall is one of my favorite topics of conversation in college. The global studies department at APU is about the closest thing you'll get to experiential learning in college. I often see a clear difference in how I learn compared to my peers. I cannot count the number of ways Waldorf has shaped me. I am truly grateful.

Zane Reynolds ('07) Reseda, CA Occupation: I work at the Hammer Museum part time doing audio and video for lectures and events. HH influence: Highland hall has taught me that all I really need to do is focus on my hobbies which is art and music--- and that's all I pretty much do. It's like living life without fear. Highland Hall has given me a true Jedi mindset for what it is I need to accomplish with my life. Nothing stops me from getting what I must get done.

Owen Galipeau ('07) University of Redlands or at Home. Occupation: The name of my emphasis is currently: Journeying Along the Road of Life; Discovering Creativity and Knowledge Through Literature, Writing, and Critical Studies. I am essentially focusing on literature and writing to further my skill in both fields so that I can go on to teach and write professionally. The title will probably change my senior year. HH influence: Too many. Highland Hall and Waldorf education in general both helped me become a well-rounded student, and to look at the world from many different perspectives. It also gave me a strong humanistic outlook that has served me well both inside and outside of academics.

## Highland Hall Class Reps

1967	Leslie	(Barnum) Mason	catclea@yahoo.com
1968	Phoebe	Barnum	phoebe.lowell@speakeasy.net
1971	Brian	Higgins	bri.p.higgins@gmail.com
1972	Pomm	(Fisher) Hepner	pommartist@aol.com
1973	Giselle	Teller-Holt	GKTeller@yahoo.com
1974	Dale	Howard	dale@purebodywork.com
1975	Valerie	Higgins	kellyhillgirl@netzero.net
1976	David	Winkler	itsmewink@yahoo.com
1977	Steve	Wilson	steve_wilson@yahoo.com
1978	Sheryl	Tash	sheryltash@hotmail.com
1979	Clay	Baker	clay@claybaker.com
1980	Angela	Dukich	angeladhh@gmail.com
1981	Susan	(Armstrong) Selbrede	bredebunch@msn.com
1982	David	Orr	civix@ibert.org
1983	Sean	Perry	sperry@endeavorla.com
1983	Janine	(Miseroy) Hofer	janine@thibiant.com
1984	Cynthia	(Dukich) Sorenson	windsorchick@msn.com
1985	Karine	(Barricklow) Calhoun	karinecalhoun@msn.com
1986	Molly	Morrissey	doodler37@socal.rr.com
1987	Annette	Irving	airving@san.rr.com
1988	Stacie	Milmeister	stacie@anastasiaart.com
1989	Claudine	(Cashion) Tonarely	claudine@tonarely.com
1990	Jennifer	Akana-Sturla	akanasturla@gmail.com
1991	Monica	(Palma) Smith	cal_garunk@yahoo.com
1992	Hope	(Jacobs) Davidson	.hopita@verizon.net
1993	Sarah	Jorgensen	purplesej@gmail.com
1994	Kurt	Othmer	kurt@eeginfo.com
1995	Christy	(Fulgenzi) Bergin	christybird13@hotmail.com
1996	Jonathan	Schwartz	jonnyschwartz@gmail.com
1997	Kelly	Ferris	kelly@O4RL.com
1998	Philip	Lightstone	Pdeanlight@yahoo.com
1999	Audrey	Clark	audriana5@hotmail.com
2000	Anthony	King	Akonig@ucla.edu
2001	Kandis	Gilmore	misskandis@hotmail.com
2002	Victoria	Balfour	ToriBalfour@gmail.com
2003	Jennifer	Werkmann	jenniwerks@yahoo.com
2004	Brendan	Galipeau	brendan.galipeau@gmail.com
2004	Amanda	Keledjian s	wimpanda@yahoo.com
2005	Chelsea	Moon	chelseamoon@mac.com
2006	Sarah	Vainstein	saritaemonita@gmail.com
2007	Jamie	Aronson	jmaronson@umail.ucsb.edu
2008	Alisa	Pitcock	lucyamp@yahoo.com
2009	Hannah	Phillips	depaix@hotmail.com
2009	Anisa	Saliefendic	moviebabe@socal.rr.com

## Alumni Passings....

Highland Hall sends our sincerest condolences to the families & loved ones of Dee Dee Bellson ('78), Janella Weaver ('76) & Jamie Fenster ('88).





# Building Our Future

## Our Challenge Ahead... By Jim Pedroja, Administrative Director

Highland Hall has been around for over five decades, but only in the last ten years have we witnessed a real stability in terms of enrollment and financial solvency. In 2005, the year of our school's 50th anniversary, the school drew up a master plan to provide our school with a road map for developing the campus over the next 50 years. One of the single most crucial items in the plan was that Highland Hall needed to replace its outdated buildings and build additional facilities to meet the expanded enrollment. Quite literally, our faculty and students were squeezed into too small classrooms with inadequate infrastructure to meet our school's needs.

In 2007, a small, but courageous group of parents created the Capital Campaign Committee to get started with these ambitious building plans. The committee's first goal was to raise \$2 million to build a new performance theater, a 200 person capacity theater which would serve our entire community. To date, the committee has succeeded in raising \$1.7 million despite the economic downturn. This is even more remarkable considering the fact that many of our parents make great sacrifices to send their children to Highland Hall. So, we're immensely grateful for the generosity of these parents, as well as grandparents, faculty and friends who have made a commitment to support the school's mission well into the future.

This summer, we also witnessed the groundbreaking on our long-awaited new gymnasium, made possible by a generous donation from one of our Highland Hall families as well as a loan from the Rudolph Steiner Foundation. The gymnasium is a cost-efficient prefabricated structure by Sprung Structures, Inc. The impact of having our own gymnasium on campus is one that we can hardly imagine. We will finally have games on campus with the school spirit that our students until now have only dreamed of. We may even see faculty members don cheerleading outfits...or at least out there cheering by the hordes.

Meanwhile our capital campaign committee is forging ahead with raising the remaining \$300,000 in order to start building a new theater. Though we are 87% of the way there, Highland Hall, like other non-profits, has been hit hard by the economic climate affecting the country. Demands for financial assistance have risen dramatically and many parents are struggling in the midst of the worse economy since the school opened. To build this theater, nearly within our grasp, requires us to appeal to our wider community for support. That is why we need your help.

We know that as alumni, you want to see your school continue into the next century. Your gift to the Capital Campaign will not only help build a performance theater for today's students, but will also provide a legacy for generations of students in the future. All gifts, regardless of the size, are important to our campaign and very much appreciated.





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## alumni news



# All Alumni Reunion - Oct. 17, 2009

**Mark your calendars...**  
**Saturday, October 17,**  
**2009**

Highland Hall is pleased to be hosting our 2nd annual Alumni "Oktoberfest." Join longtime friends and faculty as we celebrate the fall season, Bavarian style with a slight reggae twist.

Festivities will begin at 6 pm with live reggae music, a buffet dinner, plus a slideshow of the old days.

Alumni, alumni parents and former faculty are invited to attend this special evening.



Tickets are \$35 per person (if purchased before October 10th) or \$45 at the door.

Price includes buffet dinner (including vegetarian options), imported German brew, wine, dessert and much more!

Don't miss a wonderful evening!

**Register online** at: [www.highlandhall/alumni](http://www.highlandhall/alumni) or call 818-349-1394 x223 to order tickets over the phone.

**We look forward to seeing you there!**