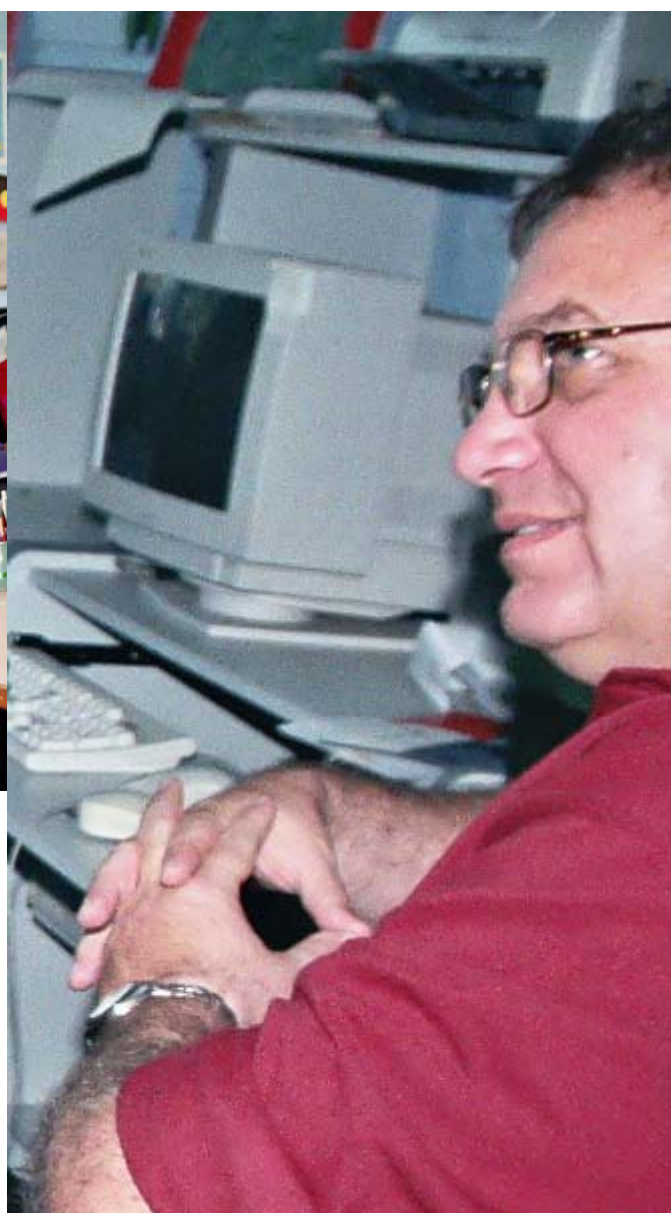




australasian association of progressive and alternative education

**AAPAE NEWSLETTER No 5**  
**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2004**



**GABRIELLE McINTOSH**  
welcomes  
**Yaacov Hecht,**  
To  
**B Y C 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

**AAPAE  
Members & Friends  
GATHER  
at  
Blacktown Youth College  
to spend the day with  
Yaacov Hecht  
and each other.**

Karen (Kinma, Teacher)  
Jen (Wollongong University)  
Mary (University Western Sydney)  
Sarah (Melbourne, Teacher)  
Lia (Past Currumbena Parent)  
Donald (Sydney, Psychotherapist)  
Anna (Sydney)  
James ( Past Currumbena Student)  
Wendy (Ob. –Currumbena Teacher)  
Sue (Currumbena Teacher)

By Cecelia Bradley



Yaacov arrived in Sydney on Wed evening 14<sup>th</sup> April and Chris Price played host to an informal get together at her home, to welcome him to Australia for his second visit. The following day, Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> by various means we all made the journey to Blacktown and began 8 hours of intense interaction.

My use of the term 'gathering' was deliberate. I knew that we could not do justice to Yaacov's potential workshop programme in one day. I knew that those who had heard his lectures before probably needed to move on and hear and develop new areas. Yaacov, after listening to the introductions of the participants, made the decision that because there was a wealth of strength and experience amongst the group, that he would dedicate a significant section of our time to the process, as Stuart Hill, Professor of Social Ecology at University of Western Sydney expressed, "gifts to give and receive".

Some of us had heard Yaacov's development of the place of pluralistic learning as one of the three main tenets of his definition of democratic learning before. He skimmed through this again so that those who were hearing about it for the first time would understand the context, but it was inevitably packed, rushed and missed some of his previous light-hearted and humorous discussion of the points.

He then went on to develop his illustrations of the practical examples of ways that the theory is put into practice in Israel. For me this was a logical extension of our previous sessions.





Andrew (Currambena, Parent) Stuart (University of West Syd) Robyn (Sth Aust, Teacher)

Yaacov discussed the development of self managed learning (SML) which enables the individual to take control of their learning, and then went onto the classroom and the school (Hadera) processes. He discussed two examples of the work in the wider community and showed what big picture thinking can achieve. These were the specialist community at Kishor which is for those with different mental abilities /disabilities / illnesses. This community changed from an institutional place where the people were working almost in assembly lines with minimal community participation to a self-managed and socially and economically independent and productive community. He then showed us the work the Institute has done with the city project at Beer Sheva which has pop 200 000. I found the articulation of the practical expression of the theory affirming, inspiring and also when applied to a whole city community daunting, challenging and thought provoking.

This combination of impute from Yaacov and individuals then taking responsibility for initiating and leading a specific section of time, from their area of passion, interest and strength, was for me an example of democratic learning in place. It satisfied the needs of all except 3 of the group of 20. I found it positive and reassuring that they felt safe and strong enough to state their feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction honestly. My perception of the issues they articulated is

- 1 They wanted more impute from Yaacov himself
2. More attention to process and less 'formless' talk
3. That Pluralistic Learning offered them nothing new or different

Some general positives as I see them

\*new staff at schools had opportunity to meet and begin to build knowledge of what we think we are about and find support and consider ways to become involved in AAPAE

\*interstate participants maintained our contacts outside Sydney

\*Having participants from 3 universities created opportunities for partnerships and alliances which may enable AAPAE to develop further some of it aims of reaching into areas such as teacher education, policy and curriculum development and research opportunities.

Questions I now ponder

How do we benefit from the contact with those in disciplines such as Social Ecology and Political Science and understand the perspectives they can share on democratic learning within a democratic society?

What is AAPAE's role? I had seen it as primarily a support org for those involved in Alternative, progressive, democratic ed and where necessary to take action in the educational, political, community, media if such actions contribute to this support. It is becoming clearer that Yaacov's Institute of Democratic Education has a more specific, conscious, definite role of working across the board, in the whole community, to actively bring about change in education and life, through such things as Institutes such as NZ are initiating. Yaacov shared his expertise and experience with us in his thoughtful and sensitive way and I would like to express our thanks to him for being generous and willing to continue supporting our dialogue and work in Australia. Since saying our farewells on Thursday evening, Yaacov has crossed the Tasman to New Zealand and his intensive week with our colleagues there. (See Report Below)



Cecelia (AAPAE Canberra) Yaacov (IDE TelAviv) Wendy (Currambena Teacher)

I would like to thank Gab (yes of Queen Gab fame!) and all at Blacktown Youth College for inviting us to their country and making their space and facilities available. I hope that BYC is now firmly placed alongside Currambena and Kinma as one of our Sydney AAPAERS! Tim Perkins and Chris Rochester who provided nourishing, and sustaining food for a marathon session. Andrew Pahlman and his family, who offered accommodation and transport for Yaacov and attending to all the IT matters. Chris Price who organised many of the nitty gritty things such as payment, presents, receipts, handouts etc. All of the participants some of who travelled long distances to attend and enabled the event to happen so a special thanks to all for coming.

### GIFTS to GIVE and RECEIVE

A summary of issues arising from the Gathering with Yaacov Hecht  
at Blacktown Youth College, Blacktown on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004

#### Sarah Teleshevsky

Wants to start a democratic school in Melbourne Has a dream Has parents and children  
Has no money, premises or teachers. Had not known until recently that there were  
already people and schools in Aust with similar ideas. Personally struggled at school.  
Her own kids are struggling

WHAT DO I DO?

Gab offered the experience of how she set up BYC

Advertise a meeting Set a start date Find a rent free place if possible

Volunteer to run with no money for 1 year. Need some financial reserves to do this

Choose a place that has a youth connection Home /school liaison

Put out lots of flyers everywhere Call it a community project

Make no promises which you cannot keep

“WE do reading/writing & hot chips!”

Others in the group suggested

\*contacts in the Melbourne/Victorian region

Preshil, The Village School, Fitzroy Community School

\*Find an ally and support person

\*Seek support from outside

\*Plan action in stages - publicity –next meeting etc

\*Attend AAPAE conference in Melbourne in September

\*Contact Mary Kalantzis (Melbourne University)

#### Sue Goode

Feels guilty that 68 kids benefit from Currumbena, same small numbers in other places.

How can all kids receive the benefits of Dem Ed?

How can I as a teacher extend the understanding of dem ed to the wider world?

Is it a strong internal voice?

Suggestions

\*sow small seeds, be influential in other schools as to how things could be different

\*co-ordinate studies of work on emotional intelligence

\*build personal relationships

\*Use the Philosophy Page in Newsletters and send these to other schools particularly in  
local area

\*Make connections with local schools

\*Organise seminars – bring people from other schools

\*build a team of advisors to work with and help change schools

\*democratic schools become demonstration schools

\*recognise the skills of ‘the other’

\*Use signage which asks strategic questions

\*Give copies of papers eg Stuart Hill gave copy of Y’s paper to all the principals in ACT

\*Develop Sisterschools

\*Infiltrate structures and Institutions eg Current Behaviour Management

\*Ask questions -- Research - let Uni people know

\*What is the Smallest Meaningful Initiative you can GUARANTEE to do???





Lia & Anna (Currambena Family, Sydney) Carson (University of Sydney)

### Andrew Pahlman

How are we dealing with Government Accountability?

Have we articulated appropriately our suggestions for alternatives ways of accountability?

Suggestions

\*Need feedback from Parents and kids

\*Indicators of wellbeing

\*Measure teachers rather than kids (Lyn Carson had suggestions about how this could happen)

\*Happiness Economics (Donald Marmara)

\*Group of Scientists such as that formed to help Summerhill (Yaacov)

\*Proactive positive rather than reactive responses

\*Australasian Evaluators may have strategies

\*This is a worldwide problem so form an International Research Team which countries can consult people such as Yoshi Nagata (Japan) etc

\*Continue to pursue the idea of "Schools of Special Character"

\*"Fight Clever" not angry. Aggressive etc

\*use IDEC 2006 pre & post to include and involve the govt and all strands of ed and the community

\*Minister of Ed opens /closes IDEC \*Cost to govt of democratic schools

\*Research using democratic principles in business/ org as well as schools



Tim & Chris our wonderful Caterers!

## Stuart Hill

Stuart shared some of his thinking with us  
Vision of Dem Ed

Specifics of Dem Ed?  
What do have to overcome?  
What's it going to take?

### Context

He spoke briefly about the notions of thinking of change as

\*Doing things more efficiently?

\*Substituting one for another which can result in being protective of what is?

\*Moving towards the idea of REDESIGN which has the possibility of creating a different education for a different system

He emphasised the need to ask strategic questions

How do we enable? How do we Design not just MANAGE? What do we want to create?

How do we design schools which enable democracy or his term CO-OPRACY?

Work from the place of strength

Find somewhere it works and take it somewhere it doesn't

He introduced the Experience of the Peckham Experiment which has important findings relevant to dem ed.

Some of the Writings and Papers suggested by Stuart

\*Changing Places Re-imagining Australia 2003 - John Cameron (ED)

\*Mulligan M & Hill S Ecological Pioneers 2001

\*Camping to Change the World 6<sup>th</sup> International Camping Congress 2003

\*Autonomy, mutualistic relationships, sense of place and conscious caring: A hopeful view of the present and future

\*Learning Ecology- A New approach to learning and Transforming Ecological Consciousness: Experiences from Social Ecology in Australia

\*The Peckham Experiment into Health Ecology

\*Social Ecology as a Framework for Understanding & working with Social Capital & Sustainability within Rural Communities

### Process of Change



Mary (University of Western Sydney)

Donald ( Psychotherapist, Sydney)

### **ACTION PLANS**

Yaacov suggested that each person frame one step they would take post the meeting. Time and energy levels at the conclusion of a long day made this a difficult session.

IDEC 2006 – Share our Vision (All interested)

Organise meeting/s to clarify vision (Donald) Stuart suggested that this had been articulated enough for people to be able to decide whether they were interested so this was not a priority at the moment. To be returned to at a later date as part of review processes.

Make Dem Ed part of a University Education School (Stuart)

Translate FAQ from IDE's website (Yaacov) and incorporate in AAPAE website (Cec)

Explore the possibilities of SML & Dem Ed at Wollongong Sydney Western Sydney Melbourne & Macquarie Universities

Open a school (Sarah)

Join ausschools (those who are not yet members)

Clearing House for reports on Yaacov's day to all participants (Cec)

Attend next IDEC 2006 meeting at Currumbena 28<sup>th</sup> April (Karen, Donald and all those interested in participating in planning etc)

Guest Speaker at Universities (Tim)

Attend AAPAE Conference at FCS in Sept (EVERYONE!!!!!!)

Organise Bi-monthly seminars in different states (Need organiser for this? Anyone interested?)

### **REPORT on LECTURES & WORKSHOPS GIVEN BY YAACOV HECHT IN NEW ZEALAND APRIL 2004**

by Juli Gassner-Gering

A group of us have spent a 'wicked' ( new zealandism i've become partial to) week in Christchurch, NZ. The week was planned by Yaacov and coordinated locally by Rose; involved in playcentre- a unique new zealand playgroup/preschool network ([ <http://www.playcentre.org.nz> ][www.playcentre.org.nz](http://www.playcentre.org.nz)) and a parent at Tamariki school ( host idec 2002). Rose, together with Pat Edwards (past principal Tamariki) hooked into Yaakov's energy during his visits 2002/3. Tremendous people involved- from Tamariki, Discovery1 and Mountain Valley ( all elementary schools in New Zealand- ranging in degree from fully to only partially government funded, 12- 200 students, rural and urban settings) and some folk from riverside community ( group of approx 80 people living together in a northern patch of paradise in south island). The group gathered in the city at Discovery1 School for a week of lectures, dialog, workshops, dialog, laughter, dialog and tears to explore issues within our learning communities, help strengthen them and perhaps most excitingly for idec/ aapae folk, form the foundation of the nzide; new zealand institute of dem.ed (non official name - forthcoming meetings will decide such)

The week was divided into 3 separate workshops, a lecture, panel and assorted gatherings for those interested in establishing the Institute. Some 60- 80 people attended one event or more; different people attending varied combinations of these offerings. There was a core group of about 15 of us who participated in the full 7 day program - and full it was; intense and powerful stuff; akin to a smaller idec. Community members involved in local business, politics, schools and other social organisations took part. The core group was made up of staff and parents from the above mentioned communities, a lecturer and student from teacher's college, teachers from mainstream schools and of course Yaakov.

The panel was a highlight as it pinpointed the opportunities from toddler to tertiary in pluralistic ed. in this country- quite amazing. As someone who has only recently joined the community, I can only invite you to visit and share in an extraordinary living, breathing democratic community. Some of you shared in Tamariki's energy in 2002.

A website has just been started up – <http://www.nzide.org.nz>



It is the intention of the institute to support the building of pluralistic learning opportunities and communities; within our schools and beyond.

Integral themes:

- 1) recognising individual uniquenesses and the resulting foundation of strength - both as people and as organisations
- 2) using such strengths to optimise our co-operative work process -contributing each where possible and sharing knowledge, skills and beliefs
- 3) forever learning/ teaching- using strengths, vast array of human and other resources and a growing toolbox to value the past and consider the future as means to make appropriate decisions for each distinctive community

For those in various stages of forming and or maintaining learning communities, I think it is wise to note that time has played an important role in the New Zealanders arriving to this point. Tracey, Learning Advisor at discovery1, a key player in the formation of the group, highlighted the crucial role of time in doing its work for vital bridge building. Personally, I feel that the energy has been growing and a mix of luck, timing, Christchurch as a city right now, Yaakov and the myriad personalities who gathered, resulted in this institute.

If daring to speak on behalf of the others who took part- a strong pioneering feeling pervades - as if we are living the seed germination stage of something extraordinary. Mid week we read of the democratic workplace federation's inaugural conference in Minnesota -couldn't but help feeling that something greater than the sum of our parts is spreading.

Yaakov's humility, humour and honesty were as usual inspiring and encouraging- as were the gifts that each person brought; developing relationships integral to our gathering. Join us in celebrating the opening of an exciting chapter in the learning history of the Pacific/ Oceania region.

tena koutou, tena koutou tena tatou katoa greetings to us all juli

Hope to see you all plus many new friends at the

## 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION

of

## PROGRESSIVE and ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

at

## FITZROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

597-599 Brunswick Street

North Fitzroy

Victoria, 3068

Australia.

[www.fcs.vic.edu.au](http://www.fcs.vic.edu.au)

**28<sup>th</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004**

**THEME: "The Medium is the Message?"**

**(The society &structure of schools is more important than the 'taught' curriculum?)**

**For more information contact**

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# INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2004

*December 3rd-11<sup>th</sup> 2004*  
**Shanti and Sustainability in Education,**  
in Bhubaneswar t

Latest News from Amukta

During the conference we will organise visits to project sites where you could see work with the village children & their communities. If some of you want to make little longer trips, you can visit the projects either before or after the conference. I could organise visits around any of the cities that you may fly through too. If you have a stopover in Delhi, you could visit a school/project/NGO that is doing interesting work in Delhi or nearby.

It is a good time in the year, so we could also visit a nearby forest and/or the largest brackish water lake in Asia where there are millions of migratory birds that fly in at that time of the year. A lot of possibilities, but just give me a few days to get my act together for the website and have discussions with the team that I need to put together now. There are many who want to help including children of all ages.

## **WORLD COUNCIL OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION 11<sup>th</sup> Triennial CONFERENCE (WCCI)**

is being held 5<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> July 2004 in Wollongong

For more information Contact Jen Burnley

[jburnley@uow.edu.au](mailto:jburnley@uow.edu.au) Phone: 42214667

I notice in the fine print that it may be possible to attend this conference for one day. It would be great if we could have some AAPAE presence at this important international event.

## **UPDATES**

### **The Review of Non Government Schools in NSW.**

The Amendments to the Education Act 1990 have been passed and AAPAE and individual members have received replies to their responses, from The NSW Minister Dr Andrew Refshaugue reassuring us that

“recent changes to the Act will ensure that parents who exercise the right ( ‘to choose schools that offer distinctive goals and feature that reflect their values and expectations’) have an assurance that the school of their choice is meeting high standards across a broad range of factors contributing to educational quality. There is NO INTENTION TO BE PRESCRIPTIVE IN TERMS OF THE VALUES OR PHILOSOPHIES SCHOOLS APPLY WHEN ADDRESSING THOSE FACTORS.” (My capitals and remember QLD told Booroobin they had no arguments with their PHILOSOPHY!)

He went on to say “The requirements to report on school performance in statewide tests and examinations is an indicator for school annual reporting and does not form part of the Act.... As a safeguard against the introduction of new elements without proper consultation, the Act provides that **the Minister is to seek the advise of persons with expertise in accountability matters. I reiterate my previous assurance that there is no intention to use annual reporting as a means of forcing universal participation of schools in statewide testing. I gave this assurance in my speech to parliament introducing the bill.** The act also includes provision for schools to follow THEIR OWN CURRICULUM provided they can demonstrate to the Board of

Studies that their alternative addresses the needs of their students. Placing the onus on the schools to show how their alternative will meet their students' needs is appropriate given that the BOS's syllabuses have widespread support across government & non government schools."

When discussing the testing issue with Yaacov recently and recognising it as a worldwide issue, he floated the idea that we need an INTERNATIONAL body of EXPERTS which countries can call on to provide expertise on different sorts of accountability matters. This may be quite a timely thought given the minister's statement above!

If any schools want a copy of this letter let me know.

**The BOOROOBIN Sudbury Democratic Centre of Learning is School** are giving much time and attention to fundraising so that they can take the steps, through the courts, necessary to regain their accreditation. Thank you to those AAPAE members and friends who have already contributed and it would be great if more could help through donations or buying raffle tickets etc.- A current raffle is for a beautiful painting of a yellow faced honeyeater on a staghorn in the rainforest by Isaac Sheppard. Cost of ticket is \$10.00. (Send money to Cec or Chris or directly to Booroobin)

To read more about the situation and the amazing efforts that the Booroobin community are making, have a look at the website

<http://booroobinschool.squirrel.com.au/>

#### **Federal Governemnt's Taking Schools to the Next Level**

The date for responding to this National Consultation has been extended to the end of MAY so please as many as possible go to the DEST site [www.dest.gov.au/nef/schools](http://www.dest.gov.au/nef/schools) and fill in the survey. This is an important opportunity to let the Federal Minister of Education know our views

#### **Every Chance to Learn**

The ACT Minister of Education, Katy Gallagher announced this week the release of the Review of Curriculum "Every Chance to Learn" and called for interested people to respond to it. There are some very telling points in this

Excerpt form article in Canberra Times by Daniel Landon 18<sup>th</sup> April

The Every Chance to Learn report and discussion paper, which proposes a framework and principles to guide schools during the next 10 years, goes beyond specific academic requirements and sets out the characteristics it wants students to have.

The report says that in addition to traditional subjects such as Maths, English and Science, schools should focus on the overall personal development of each student.

"The curriculum requirements should ... cater for students' emotional, physical and intellectual well-being; prepare them to be effective citizens in a democratic society; and develop their understanding of the world in which they live."

Values, citizenship, indigenous issues, the environment and the world of work are among the topics the report says are important.

The Minister is also calling for responses to the Report.

<http://activated.decs.act.gov.au/>



**MAKING AAPAE KNOWN!**

Please pass on AAPAE news and information to anyone interested.  
I encourage you to join the association as individuals and or school members.  
Look forward to seeing many of you in MELBOURNE.

AAPAE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
WILL BE HELD at the CONFERENCE in MELBOURNE  
ANYONE INTERESTED IN PROPOSING MOTIONS FOR THE AGM PLEASE CONTACT US WITH  
YOUR PROPOSAL.

**Contact Details**

For further information or to join the association contact

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visit our  
Website: [www.marbury.sa.edu.au/aapae](http://www.marbury.sa.edu.au/aapae)