

Students Discover Alternative Way of Life at Celo

by Jan Naugle

While most Guilford students were nestled cozily in bed, Jeff Bentley, Kendra Berger, Eliza Blake, Eric Bozyski, Donna Crane, Leslie Fitzgerald, Seth Hassett, Vic Johnson, Anne Jonas, Vicki Lyatt, Jan Naugle, and Tom Riddle were on the road early Nov. 7 to the Arthur Morgan School, a junior high boarding school of eleven students, in Celo, North Carolina, where students and faculty work together to solve problems and create their own mini-community.

The idea of a school in which students could not only learn basic subjects but have week-long hikes in the surrounding mountains, help build a greenhouse, and take such varied electives as music, massage, cooking, tie-dyeing, and dance was originally taken from Ernest Morgan's ideas of creating a school with an atmosphere in which creativity, investigation, and self expression could thrive.

His son, Arthur Morgan, founded this North Carolina school twenty-five years ago based on these values. Arthur Morgan explained how Ernest and his wife were appalled at the way some public schools were being run in that they "beat out all of the creativity and imagination of kids." Arthur's enthusiasm for the school was illustrated in a story he told of an introverted, insecure student who came to the school and "suddenly discovered she was somebody."

Constance Buch was an invaluable aid in describing the function and process of the school. She explained how the students live in homes with house parents, how chores are assigned and scheduled, and other details of the system.

The AMS students shared their ideas as well. Kevin, a ninth-grader from New York, prefers AMS to public school and explained, "In public

school they make you think. Here they encourage you to think." Many students commented on the freedom the school allows and the respect given to individual opinions.

"It's a blast!" Matt, another ninth-grader summed up.

stories and ideas with one another, played on the large log see-saws and a tire suspension toy.

Dinner and clean up was followed by a moonlight walk to "the saddle" where hours of songs and talk around a fire was only temporarily interrupted for a few rounds of "ghost

because she had been to Celo and liked it but had not gone while school was in session.

"It was pretty obvious (the people at Celo) were a really neat bunch of people, and they would be very receptive to our coming." Eliza said, and she thought the Celo group and

when he relayed how much he valued the school's non-competitive attitude. "Put forth your best effort," he said, "no matter how small. [This] is what matters."

The Guilford group left for home and brought with them various parts of the experience. "I came home aching!" Eliza laughed.

Anne kept the memory of the "love and friendship [the group] shared."

Vic spoke for everyone when he said, "It made you feel good to be helping someone else," and the overriding question on each person's mind calling the sharing, the mountains, and the laughter seemed to be, "When can I go back?"



Photo: Jan Naugle

The Guilford group arrived just in time for a hearty home-cooked lunch then divided into groups with AMS students and staff for various work jobs including wood-cutting and gathering, roof repair, and gardening. After the chores were finished, students exchanged

in the graveyard." Freshly gathered eggs tempted the palate after a chilly night in sleeping bags.

Most of the Guilford participants heard about Celo through Eliza Blake, president of Quaker Concerns, who instigated the excursion. She wanted to

go the Guilford group would be a good match. "And it was," she added. Tom was impressed by the maturity of the kids. Anne mentioned the encouragement to be an individual and the importance of everyone the school stressed as strong and positive assets.



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