

# GRASSROOTS



**Gamot Cogon School**  
Steiner-Inspired Education

Libongcogon,  
Zarraga, Iloilo

*Preparing Students To Become  
Self-Actuated, Creative, Responsible,  
Compassionate Human Beings*

SEPT 2008 • Issue No. 2

## DEAR PARENTS,



Lisa and Birger, our  
volunteers from  
Germany

September  
greetings to  
everyone!

The school year is now in full swing and how quickly time flies! This issue of our newsletter falls within the mood and spirit of Michaelmas. The festivals give us an opportunity to move rhythmically through each year

connecting with the changing seasons both inwardly and outwardly. For Michaelmas, the motifs and themes of this festival can give both parents and children strength and courage for doing right deeds and for life itself. This is also the theme of one of the festival songs that echoes through the campus each year at this time.

Many of you may have seen some new faces around the school or heard from your children about Ms. Lisa and Mr. Birger. Lisa and Birger are graduates of Steiner high schools in Germany and have come to spend a year with us to help with the school as part of their volunteer year. We welcome them to the school community and look forward to working with both of them on various projects throughout the year...

Looking ahead, we are also excited about the upcoming visit of experienced Steiner educators — Gabriele Niemann and Tanja Baumgartner. Gabriele has been with us before and will be working again with the teachers and observing classes while Tanja will be doing eurythmy with the children, with the teachers and also with parents! Gabriele will also have a question and answer session with parents on Saturday, October 4th at 5.45pm. Please come! We also will be launching our next cycle of teacher training this November 30. If you or someone you know of would be interested to join the training and/or apply to the school as a teacher, please contact me.

Finally, thanks to Anna Slater for her continuing work with the newsletter! We look forward to seeing everyone at the school during our upcoming gatherings and events.

James Sharman, Director

## MICHAELMAS SEPT 29

Michaelmas is the feast of St. Michael, patron saint of the sea and maritime lands, of ships and boatmen, of horses and horsemen. As Michael the Victorious he is known as conquerer of the powers of darkness; the Angel who hurled Lucifer down from heaven for his treachery. He is usually portrayed as riding a white steed and carrying a three-pronged spear in one hand and a three-cornered shield in the other. Because of the strong good vs. evil theme in this heritage, the story of a similar figure, St. George and the dragon, is appropriate at Michaelmas.

This festival is usually not only celebrated as a single day but a period lasting four weeks. Here are some activities that a family can do to celebrate together:

**KITE FLYING** - Kite flying fits perfectly with Michaelmas. Older children always like to fly homemade kites when weather permits. A parent's help is often necessary here. It is a wonderful childhood experience to hold a kite floating in the air above firmly in one's hand and then to have to pull it down again. This activity is an enacted symbol of man's holding the forces of evil in his hands.

**DRAGON MODELING** - It is usually easy to find a strangely shaped piece of root while on a walk through the fields or woods. With the help of modeling wax or clay, and a little fantasy, we can make a dragon out of such roots, perhaps even one with several heads. Then out of the same material we can make a St. Michael's figure to ride on top of them. It is good for the child to experience the whole family working together on this on a Sunday afternoon. The small sculpture resulting will find its place on the festival table.  
(the above text was lifted from various Festivals Books)

For more ways of celebrating the season with your children, please ask your class teacher.

Happy Michaelmas!

## KINDERGARTEN COMMUNITY

### Festivals and Life

By Tita Bulak Lapastora, Main Kindergartner

*Celebrating festivals throughout the year is essential in the life of a child as this builds a connection to the cycles of the season, the rhythmical breathing in-and-out of nature. It establishes a certain security during the vulnerable years of childhood. There is a time for sleeping and waking, a time for contraction and expansion....a natural course of the life cycle.*

*The Michaelmas festival coincides with the harvest season. The sharing of songs, verses, stories and food helps strengthen our soul life and sense of community. Michaelmas is a celebration of our inner strength and warmth, human will, initiative and courage. It is a timely reminder of our striving to conquer and transform our everyday battles with fear, laziness, selfishness and anxiety.*

*Life in the kindergarten is a microcosm of these life-enriching battles. I am inspired by the courage of the children which I see in my daily encounters with them. The courage to open their hands to do meaningful, creative work. To take the hand of the other after a fight over a toy. Courage in opening their hearts to welcome others into their play.*

*And now, I am faced with a battle over my anxiety as I have to be away for a week to attend a workshop with Renate Briepohl on storytelling and music in Manila and observe other*

*Steiner-inspired kindergartens. I am learning to strengthen my resolve to feast on these pedagogical nourishments and come back with a little bit more courage and warmth in my heart.*

### Guiding Light

By Tita Nely Sobere, Kindergarten Assistant

*As an assistant of Kinder, I feel like this month is a big challenge for me. As Tita Bulak is attending a seminar in Manila for a week, I am tasked with doing her work in the classroom while she is away. It is quite a new experience for me.*

*In line with the celebration of the bravery of St. Michael, I am inspired to do the task with courage and confidence. To be with and guide the children, and help them do their everyday chores.*

*I do believe that if we are prepared and have trust in ourselves, we can do the right things, in the right way, with the guidance of Christ.*

## GRADE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

### Journal Entry

By Mr. Dyman Pahila, Class 1 Teacher

August 19, 08, 1:49pm...Lying on the 'banig' trying to rest and relax. I am looking at all my kids, mostly in green shirts. Two are really concentrated on their knitting, with pouted lips and furrowed eyebrows. They look like two adults trying to figure out what they will have for dinner. The other boys and girls are playing and whispering. The room has a solemn mood...for now. I keep saying to myself, 'thanks, I'm back in Neverland again. Earlier, it was chaos!' This is because sometimes unusual things happen at unexpected times. It is always a relief that despite all these unusual things, there is this 'harmonious state' where we can seek refuge and find peace. I sometimes experience this same feeling when I'm having fun... but amidst the happiness and laughter I would catch myself and want to be enclosed again by the comfort of this state. This harmonious mood that we strive to achieve in the classroom strengthens me (and the children) and gives me hope and motivation to keep going....

### Ang Hampang sa Kabuhi sang Kabataan

By Ms. Nesel Dable, Class 2 Teacher

*Ang una aga tuig sa pagpadako sang isa ka bata isa ka importante nga butang nga dapat tutukan. Ang ila nga matun-an sa ila mga palibot, mangin basehan sang ila pamatasan kag pag-atubang sa kabuhi kun sila magdako.*

*Para sa mga bata ang hampang isa ka dako nga bahin sang ila kabuhi. Adlaw-adlaw makita sila sa nagakalain-lain nga lugar. Makawiwili tan-awon ang kabataan, sa idalom sang puno sang kawayan nga nagatilipon. Isa ka seryoso nga pag-istoryahanay ang nagakatabo. Maligad ang pila ka minuto sila mabinulagay. Maligad ang pila ka minuto, isa-isa sila nga magabalik. Ang isa may bitbit nga silhig, ang isa may mga putol nga kawayan, ang iban masako sa paghimo kag pagpukpok sang ila mangin balay. Ang balay nga ini nagasilbe nga sentro sang ila paghampang. May pagkinantahanay, pag-ilinaway kag may kasadya sa magamay nga komunidad nga ini.*

*Huo, madamo nga mga bagay ang matun-an sang kabataan sa sulod sang klase apang sa adlaw-adlaw ko nga pag-oberba, ang hampang isa ka paagi sa pagtuon sang madamo nga bagay. Paagi sa paggiya sang aton kabataan sa nagakabagay kag dapat nga hampang, kita nagahatag man sa ila oportunidad sa pagpasangkad sang ila imahinasyon kag interaksyon sa iban nga mga kabataan.*



Class 2 at Play

## Magtanim ay Di Biro

By Ms. Maricel Chiva, Class 3 Teacher

For the past 3 months, Class 3 has been busy doing practical work such as gardening, compost-house building and cooking.

During our morning gardening everyday, the children learn to prepare and cultivate the soil. They were taught how to make a plot, ways of planting vegetables, and they learned about the vital elements that the plants need to grow well. We also studied the best way to cultivate and fertilize the soil naturally. They were told a story on how compost is processed and they even had a chance to build their own compost house.

But their learning doesn't end there! After two months of nurturing their garden, the children are now harvesting and cooking the food, of which we all partake every Wednesday of this month. I am so delighted whenever I see the excitement and joy in the faces of the children as they prepare the food. I am so happy that they are experiencing these real tasks and doing the work by themselves.

It sounds like we're always working, but no! We have also been having fun lessons with Math this block. As my students grow older, so do the numbers. Hundreds, thousands...even millions! They are fascinated when I tell them short stories of numbers and how they behave as they get bigger. How they become kind and helpful. How they carry some other number's load (addition), how they lend generously to those who borrow from them (subtraction), and so many other characteristics!

I am happy to say we have such a harmonious class, and I attribute some of this to the stories of the Old Testament. I can see the positive impact of these stories on the class, and I have seen how the stories positively affect the children's behaviour.

Before I forget, a million thanks to our supportive parents who have been giving their time to help the children. To Mr. Ruel Segura and Mr. Roger Loma, thank you for your help with our house building. To Mrs. Imelda Valera, thank you for the sweet pancakes and caramel popcorn!

## To Class 4 & 5? Walk This Way Please.

By Ms. Marites Pederio, Class 4&5 Teacher

Lately, I've taken to learning the handstand. My hope is that I will be able to walk on my hands within the year. Not to the market or the school, but I'd be very happy with just a few steps if I can manage it. It isn't at all easy. Sometimes I would do it: turn myself over, stretch my legs one after the other, and I would feel my uprightness in a beautiful, balanced, harmonious upside-down way.

The world looks funny from this angle, but wonderful nevertheless. Sometimes my legs would hit the floor or the wall and I would try to do it again but can't by just remembering how I did it last time. I have to recreate it and build it anew each time.

This experience is quite like teaching Grade 4/5. Although I've done grade 4 and 5 already in the past, it isn't a guarantee that I can do it perfectly (or even just as well) this year. I have to learn it and experience it anew with my new students. Everyday I am called to find new approaches to the age-old questions of what is right, appropriate, and good for the children. I don't have definite answers to these questions, but I will definitely try to practice doing handstands every morning and evening.

Class 6 at one with their surroundings



## Gratitude to Parents, Teachers & Creatures

By Mr. Warren Slater Class, 6 Teacher

I would like to begin by expressing my continuing thanks to school parents Mr & Mrs Jalandoni for the use of their home for our Grade 6 classroom. We are certainly at one with nature there! All weathers and creatures come to join us and we can examine all manner of birds and beasts without stirring from our chairs.

Gamot Cogon has welcomed the first ever teenager to the school. Adrian Dilag's thirteenth birthday was on September 19<sup>th</sup> – many happy returns! Since the last newsletter, the soon-to-be teens of Grade 6 have been learning about self-sufficiency and barter economies, the importance of trade, the qualities of money (why do we make money out of paper?) and percentages. We also moved on to European geography and covered everything from Portugal to Bulgaria, Italy to Holland (where does the river Rhine begin and end?). We even had a real-life Dutchman come to visit in the shape of Mr. Ben from Zarraga. Thanks also to you!

Other regular visitors to our classroom are our German volunteers, Birger and Lisa. Thanks very much to you for your ongoing help and assistance both inside and outside the classroom. Manong Roger has given us the skills of woodworking for our spoons and forks. Mr. Dyman brings music and song, and Miss Marites is always on hand to teach Filipino.

We are moving on to our English block (what five languages combined to make 'English?') so I expect to see some good compositions. That being said, every student has already shown an improvement in their English skill and delivery. Long may it continue!



## PARENTS' CORNER

By: *Ging Baylon, Kinder & Class 2 Parent*

"The healing social life is only found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each is living." - Isa ni sa mga pamulongon nga mabasahan sa libro sang amon pagtulun-an 'Working Together in a Waldorf School,' nga nagdala sa akon sang mga palamangkotan. Katahum batyagon nga magapuyo ako kaupod sang akon panimalay sa isa ka dalisay kag mainuswagong nga komunidad...

Gani, apat asta napulo ka mga ginikanan nga naghaling pa sa siyudad kag sa nagkalain-lain nga mga barangay sang Zarraga ang nagatlipon sa pagtuon. Sila nagapakig-ambit sang ila tiempo kag panimuot sa tinutuyo nga pagpauswag sang Institusyong, kaupod sang mga manugtudlo kag taga pangasiwa sini.

Ang Parents' Group ginahiwat kada adlaw sang Huwebes, 8.30 asta 10.30 sang aga, sa puluy-an ni Ms. Anna Slater sa Libongcogon, Zarraga, Iloilo. Nagakalipay kami sa pag-agda sa mga ginikanan sa pagbuylog sa sini nga inisyatiba.



To Parents interested in contributing an article for Parents' Corner, joining the Study Group (or you can just drop in!), or creating new Parent Committees, please contact Anna at 0915- 6453473.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

GCS Donation Cards help the school and spread a sense of meaning to others. If you'd like to know more about them, please approach Anna Slater or Jim Sharman.

GCI will also be launching a new cycle of teacher training in December. Kindly spread the word to friends or colleagues who may be interested in Steiner Education as a vocation.

## THANK YOU

We would like to especially thank those who have donated time, materials or resources to the school. The outpouring of generosity after the typhoon and flood has enabled the school to not only recover, but to also grow and develop. We look forward to forming long-term relationships with all the friends who share our vision of bringing Steiner Education to the grassroots!

## FINANCE

Please settle any outstanding balances you may have with the school and the bus. We need your continuing cooperation and help to continue growing our school!

## DATES TO REMEMBER: October to December '08

Oct 1	Pagpa-ambitanay; early dismissal
Oct 2 - 5	Project Break
Oct 6	Resumption of Classes
Oct 24	Kamustahan
Oct 30	Last day of Term, (no Pagpa-ambitanay but we will have early dismissal)
Oct 31 - Nov 3	Project Break
Nov 4	Resumption of Classes
Nov 28	Kamustahan
Dec 1	Bonifacio Day - no classes
Dec 18	Christmas Festival; early dismissal