

New, Fun, and Just Plain Cool

Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community



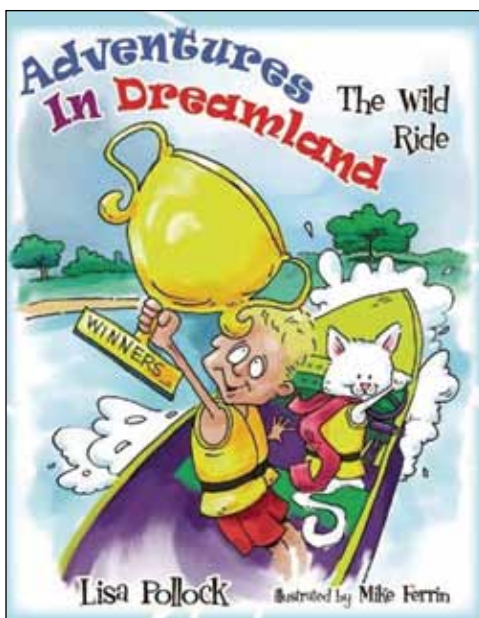
**Staff from The Naturopathic School of the Healing Arts
(Left to Right) Gana Wilson, Alycia Schoof, Simona Paicu, Sue Phare, Carole Florence, Curtrice Goddard; Tricia Bellew in foreground (See Page 64.)**

By Karen L. Totten

This ongoing column includes news, information and features about interesting classes, events, workshops, fairs, festivals, jamborees and goings-on for kids and their parents in the Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County area. We want to let our readers know about worthwhile activities that encourage conscious parenting. We also like to feature books, CDs and other media for and about kids, by local/regional authors. If your business or practice has a focus, or a new area of focus, on kids and their lives, let us know about it!

Adventures in Dreamland: *The Wild Ride!* by local author Lisa Pollock, tells the lively story of a young boy and his friend, White Kitty, as they encounter exciting adventures on the other side of sleep. Pollock wrote the book from the many stories she told her son, Cameron, as part of his bedtime ritual. White Kitty was a favorite toy for Cameron in early childhood.

Dreamland is boldly illustrated, with bright, cartoon-like drawings. Illustrator Mike Ferrin's work punctuates the action-packed style of the text and the ever-changing scenarios in which the main characters find themselves. Pollock captures that somewhat



chaotic state that dreams often create, sending the boy and White Kitty on a roller-coaster ride of adventure.

Pollock has always enjoyed writing creatively. She notes, "I love to delve into the world of imaginary characters to create my own entertaining tales. Many of my stories are inspired by family." *Adventures in Dreamland* is part of a continuing series of books based on real life, centering on the adventures of her son. Coming soon is *A Special Moment With Grandma*.

Pollock, an Ann Arbor native and, for the last six years, a Pinckney resident, says, "It is the little things in life, the cherished moments and daydreams, which help us get through stressful or difficult times. All of it creates an opportunity for inspirational, true-life stories."

Adventures in Dreamland: The Wild Ride! is available at Crazy Wisdom, and from Polly's Paper Studio in Pinckney and The Candy Trail in Plymouth, as well as online at www.zoelifepub.com and www.amazon.com.

Eve Wilson is a Certified Healer Practitioner with 25 years' experience who practices a uniquely effective and gentle way of helping children with physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual healing. Wilson, who practices from her home, works telepathically with children, engaging "with the higher self and the unconscious self to resolve the root causes of problems. People see results right away."

Wilson states that she works with children while "they are in school or doing other things. I have the parent on the phone." She adds that this approach does not involve an office visit for the child. Wilson works with children who have early trauma or hereditary weakness, social or personal challenges, and family conflict or abuse, among other things.

Much more information about Wilson and her experience with healing training, intuition development, and Reiki can be found at www.spiritualhealers.com. She can be reached at 734-780-7635.

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Hoping to quash what sometimes seems like an epidemic of rudeness, anger, and insensitivity that has developed in our society, Lexi's Upstairs manager Jan Engholm has developed a series of manners classes for children, providing etiquette training for ages 3 to 8. Engholm believes that "even very young children can learn fundamental social skills, giving them confidence to manage almost any social situation."

The classes, held on the second floor of Lexi's Toy Box at 328 S. Ashley Street in downtown Ann Arbor (see story below), explore etiquette in easy-going and fun-filled ways. Engholm uses storytelling, role-playing, and crafts, among other things, to teach whom she calls "future ambassadors for a kinder, gentler world." Kindness, courtesy toward others, and respect toward people and animals are skills that can be acquired. As she notes, "Children with basic good manners are not only nicer to be around, but more likely to succeed in life."

A longtime docent at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Engholm, who is also a K-8 substitute teacher in Ann Arbor, strongly feels that social skills will help give children confidence to manage almost any social situation. She has seen this in her work life and in her personal life as a parent. Life is just easier, notes Engholm, if one has these skills as a second-nature response to everyday happenings.

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The courses, offered weekly in groups of four consecutive weeks, run an hour in length and are priced at \$100 per four-week class. Classes are divided by age group: 3-4 years old, 5-6 years old and 7-8 years old. Engholm is considering adding classes for ages up to “tween.” Many issues arise for early teenagers concerning popularity, cell phone use, texting, et cetera, that can be addressed by etiquette, says Engholm.

And where can one use all those new manners one has acquired? Why, at a birthday party, of course! Engholm, in addition, offers private birthday parties for children ages 4 to 8 at her Lexi’s Upstairs location. Parties follow one of two themes: “Under the Ocean,” with mermaids, pirates, and sea creatures, or “Enchanted Forest,” with gnomes, fairies, and knights. The hour-and-a-half-long events include a story tailored to the birthday child and guests, party favors, and games and activities.

Engholm can be reached at 734-604-1261 or at lexisupstairs@yahoo.com.

A wonderful toy store has at least three key ingredients: oodles of bright color, a sense of style and lively energy, and most of all, that ineffable, unmistakable quality of magical playthings. **Lexi’s Toy Box in Ann Arbor is just such a wonderful toy experience.** Owned and operated by Crystal Metzger, a charming, lively woman, the little shop at 328 S. Ashley is filled with delightful European and hand-crafted toys similar to those that Metzger enjoyed as a child.

The business opened in October of 2007 in a wood-frame house that had once belonged to Metzger’s grandfather and grandmother. Built in the 1860’s, her aunt and uncle lived there during the 1950s. Later, the home was used as offices by members of the Metzger family, who were involved in the restaurant business in Ann Arbor. The house embodies a wealth of family history, and was awaiting a new direction when Lexi’s came about.

Metzger’s experiences and knowledge guide her choices of items for sale in her store. “I sell Plan Toys from Thailand, a company initially started by an architect, and so they have very crisp geometric designs and bright colors,” she notes. Metzger likes toys made from natural materials that provide opportunities for open-ended play.

Plan makes many different kinds of toys, from a wooden refrigerator with, of course, wooden ice cubes in the ice-maker, to a whole produce section of wooden fruits and vegetables.

Space is at a premium, so Metzger looks for the unique and special. There are some Fair Trade items, toys from recycled materials, and handmade toys from Michigan and various other places in the U.S. “I have three train sets carved by a family in Kentucky—maple, cherry, ash—very sweet, including a set that carries animals.” Heirloom rattles are made by a gentleman in Texas who trained as a woodworker. As for games, “It’s a Green Life” is made in Michigan. Wonderful fairy doors — which, by the way, only open for fairies — are made in Ohio.

Besides discovering toys when traveling near and far, Metzger finds toys or toymakers online and, often, they locate her first. Toymakers will often send a sample toy and, if she likes the piece, she will consider the line for the store. As for the setting for all this magic, Metzger credits her cousin, Sigrid Wittke, with helping her create a delightful environment and beautiful window displays.

In her former career life, Metzger earned a master’s degree in clinical psychology and worked in the mental health field for many years. When her daughter (for whom the store was named) was a senior in high school, Metzger decided she was ready to reinvent her life. Metzger’s daughter went out of state to college and that gave Metzger time to devote to other things. “I’ve always loved toys,” says Metzger. “If we went on a trip, London or Italy, we always visited toy stores to see what kinds of things they were selling.” Opening her own

store seemed like a natural extension of that love and of her knowledge of interesting playthings for children. “I enjoy coming to work every day,” Metzger says.

Lexi’s Toy Box is located at 328 S. Ashley in Ann Arbor. The store is open Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call 734-332-1101 or see lexistoybox.com.

We all know those moments when our crying child or a bout of poor behavior prompts us parents, perhaps already on edge, to respond in frustration — or, worse, with sarcasm or anger. In those moments, we are at a crucial juncture to decide to use our intuition, our creativity, and our inner strengths to address the situation — our “Mother Wit,” as Sonja Knighton calls it.

Practice in the art of creating healthy families and the opportunity to cultivate inspired and common-sense parenting tools is what **Ann Arbor educator Knighton offers parents in a group of “Mother Wit” workshops.** She developed the workshops from her own parenting experience and her professional work with children and families. “In my journeys over the last 14 years,” she says, “I saw the deep, unfulfilled need parents have for guidance.”

In fact, the term “Mother Wit” comes from a remark of a grandmother with whom Knighton once worked. This simple phrase inspired a response in Knighton to “offer parents support in developing the intuitive aspects of parenting.” Each family member’s

growth and well-being is supported by the Mother Wit approach, she notes, and each family’s tool box will be unique.

The Mother Wit approach also promotes understanding of family dynamics as they evolve and the family encounters new phases of their lives together. Knighton says, “Mother Wit parenting recognizes that thriving families are part of thriving communities.” She notes, “Families need a supportive, knowledgeable, and invested community in which to navigate the tasks of building family unity.” It is within this framework that a balance can be brought between family identity and the individual identities of each family member.

Knighton developed her workshops based on her own experience and education. She has a K-5 teaching certificate with an early education endorsement. Since graduating from Eastern Michigan University in 2004, she has worked as a preschool teacher.

Knighton’s thinking is, in part, influenced by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and the Stages of Development of Erik Erikson. Knighton also likes the writing of Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, as expressed in the Five Love Languages series, such as *Five Love Languages of Children*, as well as the work of parenting educators Jim Fay, Charles Fay, and Foster W. Cline, authors of *Love and Logic: Taking the Stress Out of Raising Great Kids*.

Mother Wit workshops are currently being held at Naturopathic Women’s HealthCare, 220 N. Fifth Street, Ann Arbor. The sessions run about two hours in length and cost \$20.00 per person.

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The workshop schedule for January through April includes: January 9 -- *Wit and Wisdom*: Parents will explore and develop their intuitive aspects with a mind to developing tools specific to family needs. February 6 -- *Shake It Off*: This workshop helps families create options to meet interpersonal challenges or external challenges, be they power struggles, tantrums, or resiliency to the vagaries of life. March 6 -- *Little Blessings*. April 10 -- *Parents Are People*. Knighton can be reached at 734-686-0006 or momwit@gmail.com.



Lexi’s Toy Box in Ann Arbor

The little shop...is filled with delightful European and hand-crafted toys similar to those that Metzger enjoyed as a child.



Sonja Knighton

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Crazy Wisdom Kids in the Community

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The Naturopathic School of the Healing Arts has opened a New Life Energies Clinic and is offering children's services, including bodywork, reflexology, energy balancing, and herbal therapeutics. Mary Light, ND, MH, LMT, and several naturopath interns at the school — Tricia Bellew, Carole Florence, Gana Wilson and Alycia Schoof — will see children at professional and student rates. (Student rates run \$20–\$30.)

Parents will find a soothing, orderly setting, free of the distractions of television and cartoonish posters. The suites of the clinic are decorated with quiet earth tones and pastels, in areas washed with natural sunlight. Light, who is a herbalist and naturopath and director of the school, has added some playful touches, like a big exercise ball in the waiting area and several stuffed animals. Parents will not find plastic toys or unsuitable reading material.

Light emphasizes that this is a family clinic. The clinic offers a health care choice for parents and their children, "by practitioners sensitively trained in communications and touch therapies, in a gentle and non-intrusive manner." Light points out that many of the interns are mothers or grandmothers themselves. And most have had training in various holistic practices, such as healing diets, whole foods, meditation, yoga, gardening, and dance.

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The clinic offers well-baby and well-child visits, and can address sleeplessness and anxiety, hormone balancing for teens, energy imbalances, and immune system concerns, all centered on a path that follows nature. Practitioners assess through intakes and physical exams that are non-medical and non-intrusive. Assessment involves no lab testing, for practitioners are not attempting to identify and isolate specific medical pathology. They are looking for the constitutional patterns of a child. Staff will then discuss with parents the goals for the child and do an intake based upon the goals.

"An understanding of constitution alone is a valuable guide for a lifetime," believes Light. She notes that in Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic practice, assessment of constitutions is a revered, ancient pathway to clues that can be later used in treatment. One method for determining constitution that Light uses involves reading of the iris of the eye. "Iridology is widely used by medical doctors in Germany," she says.

An herb lab is maintained on the premises, and the clinic utilizes certain tried-and-true formulations as a component of the practice. As Light explains, "Certain herbs, as used in soup, for example, or teas or brews, might strengthen the immune system or improve sleep quality, as might changes in diet."

Parents are given demonstrations of the techniques of supportive care, or education on natural therapeutic applications they can use at home. An example of such a treatment is an abdominal castor oil pack, which is applied externally and provides comfort.

For further information or appointments, contact the Naturopathic School of the Healing Arts at 734-769-7794 or visit www.naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

Helping the brain heal from the "negative impact of scary or traumatic events" — such is the benefit of EMDR therapy, according to Ann Arbor social worker and therapist Julie Frick. "Often," she says, "we experience nightmares, depression, anxiety, or stress as a result of such an event, but we need not live with these symptoms as permanent after-effects that we must simply accept."

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), initially developed by psychologist Dr. Francine Shapiro in the late 1980s, is a method that can help children and adults process negative thoughts and feelings, altering the thoughts' impact, and freeing people to continue with normal activity and development.

Many of us have experienced the sort of "flashback" that might arise from an event in our lives, such as a death, accident, or injury. Any kind of trauma that stirs deep emotion and reinforces negative patterns of avoidance, be they sleeplessness, physical complaints, or irrational fears, can trigger a response, including post-traumatic stress disorder. We might, for example, drive five miles out of our way to avoid the scene of a serious accident, be fearful of the dark, or suffer from nausea, pain, or nightmares. Children who suffer from such trauma are vulnerable in the realms of normal development, schooling, and friendships.

Shapiro, now a senior research fellow at the Mental Health Institute in Palo Alto, California, discovered that people could be helped by being guided to move their eyes from side to side (bilaterally) while being led through a process of desensitization. In this manner, she helped clients to re-integrate their traumatic experiences in a healthy way, so they could let them go. In this process, the traumatic memory would not necessarily be forgotten, but it loses its power and effect. Trauma then no longer acts as trigger for emotions every time a troubling thought or specific image appears or a related event happens.

EMDR was first implemented as an eye movement technique, hence its name, but researchers have found that other kinds of bilateral stimulation such as hand-tapping, drumming, finger-snapping, viewing bars of light or hearing alternating audio tones can be equally successful when used in the process. Frick is trained to use all these in her practice.

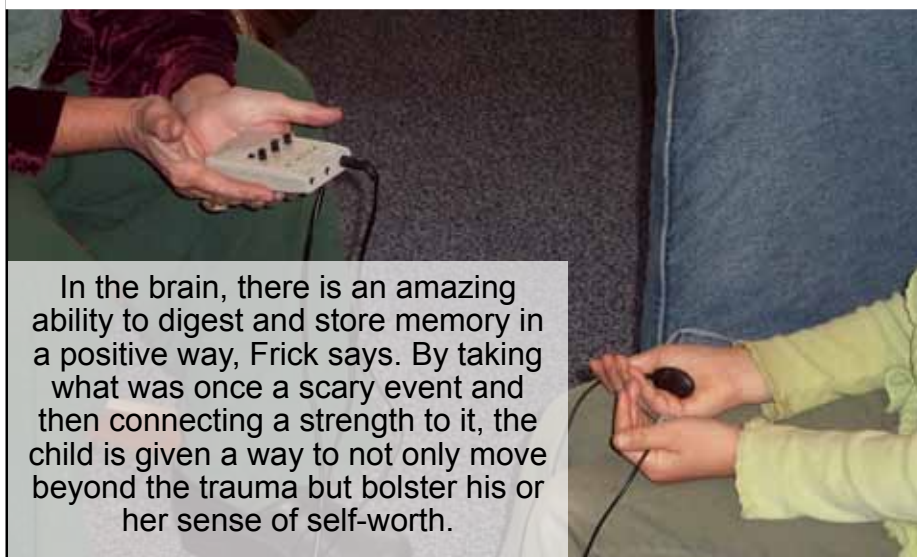
The approach Frick takes depends on the child and his or her particular needs. Therapy is combined with the bilateral movement in gentle, guided sessions that help children

access and process sensations and feelings connected with the trauma. Each session begins and ends on a positive note, and children, not the therapist, determine the content of the sessions. Each child and trauma is different, says Frick, and so, as with a ball of yarn being unraveled, the individual unwinding is done in its own way. Children usually leave the session relaxed and in a good mood. Frick makes clear that EMDR is not like hypnosis, in that this therapy does not seek to change consciousness.

A final piece of the process of EMDR therapy is deepening the child's sense of positive self-regard. In the brain, there is an amazing ability to digest and store memory in a positive way, Frick says. By taking what was once a scary event and then connecting a strength to it, the child is given a way to not only move beyond the trauma but bolster his or her sense of self-worth. In this



Ann Arbor social worker and therapist Julie Frick.



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way, EMDR is often used for performance enhancement or for dealing with conditions such as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) that cannot be cured, per se, but that bring along related issues.

Frick can be reached at 734-665-2397 and further information about her services can be found at www.juliefrick.com. In addition, interested persons can go to www.emdria.org or email her at julie@juliefrick.com.

Silence sensed that he was overly fond of longing, as he wrote letter after letter on curly birchbark.

So begins Book XV of the *Superb Owl Series* Volume III, "Longing for a New Home." The series, written by area author Peter Riegel and illustrated by Pamela Hoffer, follows the adventures of an owl called Silence as he makes his way around the world and around his own life.

Hoffer and Riegel recently discussed their books, explaining a bit about how the series started, its unique story lines, and where they plan to take it next.

Hoffer says, "Silence seems to have sprung full-blown from Peter's mind. The adventures Silence has reflect the experiences and ideas Peter has expressed...they are a very funny and wry commentary on people Peter has met or situations he has encountered." She explains that there is not a one-to-one match between a character and his real-life inspiration, but that Riegel offers "droll or quirky observations" about people or events in general. "Silence," she says, "is really Peter!"

The theme of longing returns often in the *Superb Owl Series*. Hoffer notes that many story titles suggest seeking — for example, "Silence Has a Dream," "Silence Digs a Ditch," "The Key to Immortality," "Abundance and Starvation," "Silence Looks Down a Well," and "Aimless Expedition." In addition, Riegel's interests work their way into story lines, such as his fondness for math, his world travels, and even juggling — which he does occasionally (as well as walking a tightrope), not for show, he says, "but as a technical challenge and as a meditative practice."

The first book started as a project that sprang from a story Riegel wrote. He showed it to Hoffer, who then volunteered to illustrate it. Four more stories followed and the pair put these together as a little book (Volume I) for Christmas presents. "The fun of illustrating them," Hoffer says, "is to keep from pinning down the meaning and letting the drawings just tickle the reader's mind. They are tiny little books, good for the hip pocket on a mountain top."

Although not written specifically for children, the books, with their "Zen-like, crazy wisdom and quirky story lines," as Hoffer dubs them, both amuse and delight all ages. Hoffer notes, "Children are natural philosophers, willing to ask all the hard questions. The vocabulary and ironic observations of the books are adult enough, or sophisticated or just weird enough, to be fun for adults, but children like them because children don't demand everything make 'sense.'"

In addition, children like all the animals that populate Silence's life. Riegel introduces us, says Hoffer, to "a bear, worms, dolphins, a companionate gerbil, penguins and bees, a cormorant, a raven, a turtle—even an aphysia, a sea creature used in the study of memory."

And Silence is a world traveler. Settings for stories range from Portugal to Iceland to the Falkland Islands to Silence's familiar woods, and inspire Hoffer to search out images and information to help her create the pen-and-ink illustrations for those places.

Hoffer is a social worker in clinical private practice, in her "bread and butter life," as she calls it. She is mostly retired, except for clients who want to come back for a 'booster shot.' From 1980 to the late 1990s, she taught a parenting class called "Becoming the Parent You Want to Be," co-developed and taught with Peggy Lippitt. She is spending more serious time painting lately. She shares a studio with a friend and some of her work can be seen at www.pamhoffer.blogspot.com.

Riegel, a software engineer with a mathematics degree from U of M, wrote many Silence episodes "to relate in some way with issues of writing or performing music, particularly the Silence stories that feature Raven and strands of rope." He states, "Each strand of rope may be considered to correspond to a part of a piece in Paganini's 'Centone di Sonate' for guitar and violin, which totals thirty-six parts."

The music theme appeared from the first. Riegel states that, in fact, "the first three words of the first story are the title of an album by Jefferson Airplane,

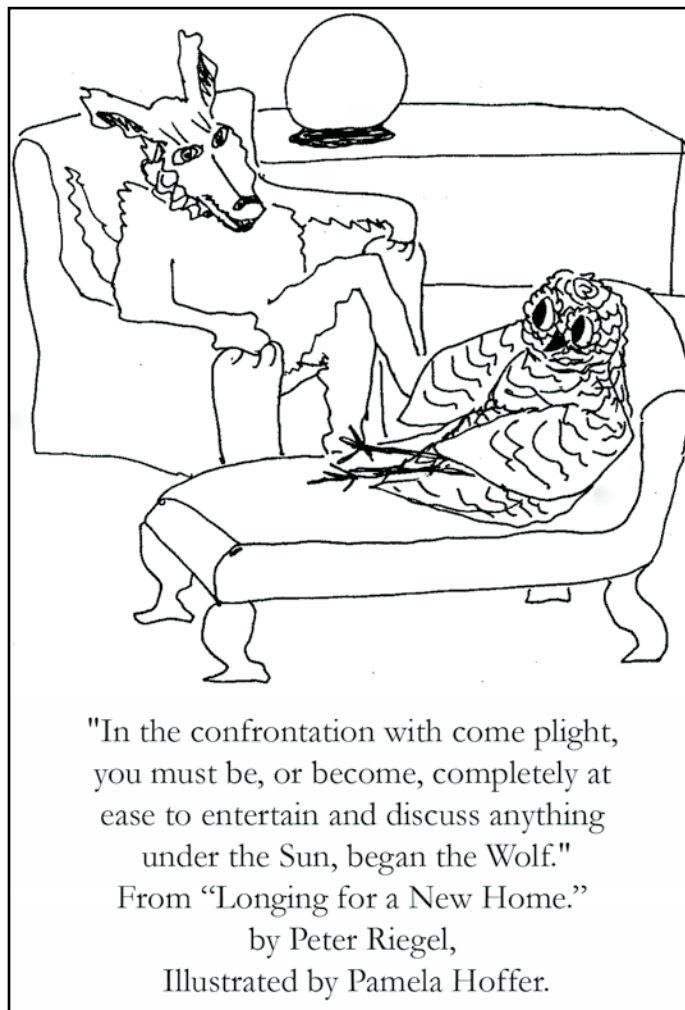
'The Walking Owl.'" Trained as a classical guitarist, Riegel has played over 400 free performances at retirement communities in the Ann Arbor and Chicago areas. An impromptu performance of "Cherry Blossoms (Sakura)" on a guitar, deftly recorded by his friend, David Berger, can be seen online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeni4yq6AIE

The *Superb Owl* series is now available at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in Ann Arbor. Though new volumes of the books are not appearing annually as they once did, Riegel aims to complete 17 volumes. Hoffer says, "I can't imagine not being enticed to keep doing this, as long as Silence is wandering about, having such quirky adventures as he does."

You can contact Hoffer at 734-663-3435 or phoffer@umich.edu. Riegel can be contacted at 734-272-4977 or hat@silentowl.net.

Please note that the "CW Kids in the Community" column is part of the editorial (not paid-for advertising) part of the journal, and the editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether the editors include material or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution jpgs and the overall mix of stories included in the column in a given issue. If you would like to submit information, please email: cwkidscolumn@crazywisdom.net. The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (May through August 2011) is March 1, 2011.

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"In the confrontation with come plight,
you must be, or become, completely at
ease to entertain and discuss anything
under the Sun, began the Wolf."
From "Longing for a New Home."
by Peter Riegel,
Illustrated by Pamela Hoffer.



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